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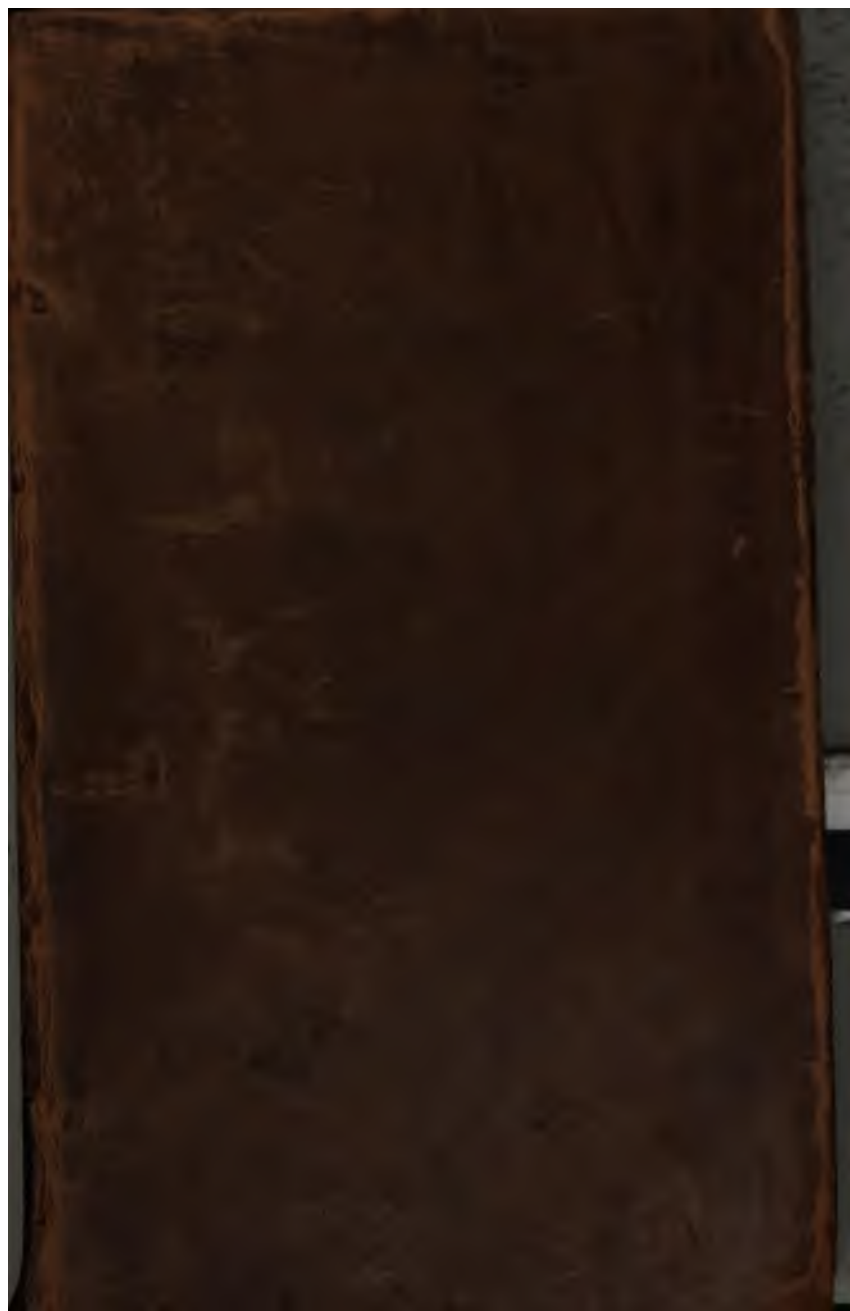
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T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F
P O R T I A.

WRITTEN by a L A D Y.

What's female beauty but an air divine,
Through which the mind's all gentle graces
shine?

These, like the sun, irradiate all between;
The body charms because the soul is seen:
Hence men are often captives of a face,
They know not why, of no peculiar grace.
Some forms, though bright, no mortal man can
bear;

Some none resist, though not exceeding fair.

Dr. Young's Univerf. Paff.

Vol. I.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
PORTIA.

CHAP. I.

The introduction, with some account of the author, and her reasons for undertaking this work.

I AM thoroughly sensible that a woman never makes a more ridiculous figure, than when she appears to the world in the character of an author ; the male part of the species having ingrossed every branch of learning, as their peculiar province, think they have an undoubted right, if we do but touch upon the borders, to seize us instantly as so many usurpers on their privileges ; and indeed I cannot but acknowledge that they have great reason

for so doing ; since by our attempting things of this nature, we do, in truth, but depart from our proper character ; for, however some female geniuses may fondly indulge their imaginations in the flattering hope of becoming immortal by their elaborate compositions, I am satisfied that literary fame, at least, will have nothing to do with us : nor will even the success which Sapho, Madam Dacier, Mrs. Rowe, and perhaps a few others, deservedly indeed obtained, by any means amount to the confirmation of a precedent, strong enough to destroy the force of this assertion ; or be able to make an adequate atonement, either to the public, for having frequently obtruded upon it so much execrable nonsense and impertinence, or to the sex in general, for the scandal of having so wretchedly employ'd their time.

The virtues of the women are, by themselves, too frequently thought difficult, if not disagreeable, only because they are obscure ; and their due cultivation is consequently too often remissly attended to, merely because they think they have no helps, no sanction from public glory, to practise them : to love retirement, to attend assiduously to the conduct of domestic affairs, to be simple, just, and modest,

are

are female virtues which confessedly stand very high in the lists of good report; yet surely not quite high enough to demand the honour of a statue; for which reason they are treated as objects of no small contempt by all who would judiciously emulate the character of what is called a nymph of spirit; who to the conscious satisfaction of preserving upon all occasions an uniform decency of conduct, prefers the wild, the mistaken glory of attempting things, that are either far beyond the constitution of her powers, or such at least as betray a most barefaced impropriety in the very success of them.

The great and shining virtues were, without all doubt, originally design'd for the atchievement of the men; and although it may appear to be a sort of contradiction, yet certain it is, that a very considerable part of a woman's true merit consists in her being unknown, except amidst the circle of her own immediate connections; for too familiar an intercourse with the World seldom fails to destroy that timid softness, that delicacy of female chastity, that is the chief ornament, the charm, the true characteristick of the sex; and I believe it is pretty generally experienced, that the transient pleasure, or the glory, if

such it can be justly called, which results from exhibiting, (I had like to have said, from prostituting) that invaluable ornament to the public, makes in fact but a wretched compensation for the loss of it; the nipping blasts of a north-east wind being not more fatally severe to the tender blossom, than is the rude, the fully-ing breath of promiscuous admiration to a woman's fame: a very ingenious gentleman, who is certainly an exquisite judge of female merit, has already assured us that

Our fairest virtues fly from public sight,
Domestic worth, that shuns too strong a light.

I look upon it as an unpardonable weakness, in the character of a good woman, to desire to be much known and distinguished; and I have frequently remark'd that those ladies generally deserve most praise, who are scarcely ever talked of at all; the human heart indeed is too apt to rest upon public approbation, tho' true glory most certainly consists in being satisfied without it; as it ought not to enter too violently into the motives of our actions, so neither ought we to be anxious that it should become the certain recompence of them; the conscious satisfaction of acting with rectitude.

titude, of performing what is our duty, being in this case amply sufficient.

It will then, perhaps, be ask'd, why I presume, in contradiction to my own doctrine, to enter the lists, as a candidate for fame? To which I at once very honestly reply, by absolutely disclaiming any such pretension; for I rejoice in the happy security of being totally unknown; and such, I confess, is my sensibility, that the most exquisite pang a poet ever felt from a favourite work's being damn'd on the first night, would be but trifling in comparison with mine; was I known to be the author of what had even merited and received the stamp of general approbation: but suppose I should not be able to offer a better reason, I have still too good an opinion of the gentlemen, not to hope, that they would be merciful enough to pardon in me the effects of that impulse which is so predominant in all my sex, I mean a strong desire of being in the fashion, let that be what it will; for such indeed I cannot help thinking it, since we are doom'd to endure that prodigious number of books of amusement, as they are modestly call'd, that have for some years last past appeared in the world; altho' I believe it will readily be granted,

that the agreeable circumstance of amusement had originally no greater a share in the motive of their composition, than it has afforded to most of their deluded readers in the perusal; and therefore if I am allowed to judge from the several subjects, the manner of treating them, and the stile, I cannot help concluding that most of them must have been wrote by women: I had like to have said, by old women, but that indeed would have been wounding myself a little too deeply.

I do not peremptorily take upon me to pronounce that this is the age of wisdom, because I am apprehensive that it might be rather difficult to maintain clearly the defence of such a position; but most certainly it is the age of writing; and sorry I am to say, that it is still less so for those who have genius, than for those who have none: but in short, the best reason, because it is the truest which I can give, for increasing this industrious number, is this; that it happens to be the opinion of those few, upon whose judgment and sincerity I have the greatest reliance, that there are some incidents in my life, and more particularly still in the lives of some of my most intimate friends and relations, which, if made public, might possibly con-

contribute in some degree to the interests of virtue and true religion ; and this, I confess, was so prevailing an argument with me, that I no longer hesitated to convince them, that nothing in my power should ever be wanting to promote both ; I have at least the satisfaction of flattering myself upon this occasion, that it proceeds from the best motive, that of a general benevolence of heart, to all my fellow-creatures, as I am thoroughly persuaded, that no true and lasting happiness can be tasted in this world, except its foundation be laid in virtue and religion ; and what effect the practice of these may have, in regard to the happiness of the next, I leave those who are better skill'd in divinity, to inculcate.

I have moreover so sincere a regard for the true interests of my fair countrywomen, that I would willingly impart to them the whole secret of the grand cosmetick ; and I can assure them from experience, that it infallibly contains the sovereign power of communicating a far more beautiful vermilion to the complexion, and a more poignant brilliancy to the eyes, than any thing that has yet been discovered among all the numberless arcana of painters or quacks, either foreign or domestic ; with this additional

advantage, that it preserves beauty even in old age; and tho' I cannot but confess that this character has very much the air of puffing off a nostrum, there is however this essential difference between all such factitious specifics and my cosmetick, that the former can never be judg'd of conclusively, but by its effects; whereas, in regard to the latter, the judgment may operate antecedently, and pronounce on its efficacy, with all the confidence of truth, even before the application.

It will now perhaps be expected, that I should made some apology to those worthy gentlemen who are ranked under the honourable denomination of critics, for presuming to offer to the public a work which contains not one single stroke of wit or humour throughout the whole; but as I previously acknowledge this, I am to hope that it will not be look'd upon as an imposition; and consequently that the author will hardly be considered in the light of a person who fraudulently exposes to sale, for sterling, metal which he knows to be greatly below the statutable standard at the assay-office; however prompt therefore my complaisance may be upon all occasions towards those respectable persons,

persons, I would wish them, upon the present, to understand that I write neither for fame, nor yet to procure a subsistence ; and that the introducing scenes of wit and humour into a work of this kind, was it even in my power to do it, would be directly contrary to the plan I had laid down, which must, on that account, render it much beneath their attention, and consequently only blunt the edge of those talents, which otherwise might haply be employed to great advantage on some more worthy subject ; I will confess indeed that it is the first attempt, and this inclines me to hope, at least, for so much indulgence from the public, as may encourage me to produce perhaps something better another time ; but should I be disappointed in the vanity of this fond hope, I can aver with truth, for the reasons above mentioned, that the mortification of laying down my pen will make no addition to my humility, that can on this occasion do any honour to my virtue.

But I think I ought at least to give my readers some description of my person, for this good reason, that the spectator, of immortal memory, some where asserts, that a reader is always best pleas'd when he knows the exact stature, corpulency,

pulency, and complexion of his author; but alas ! I am here reduced to the severest dilemma ; I am sensible that it is no less my interest, than it is my ambition to please my readers, and the deference I consequently owe them, together with a certain portion of self-love that is inseparably inherent in all the daughters of Eve, would by all means very prudently restrain me from the ungrateful task of shocking either them or myself, by a precipitate exposure of my own deformity ; yet as the sincerity I profess to observe throughout the following sheets, demands the most inviolable adherence to truth, I am under the cruel necessity of being obliged to beg the favour of them to represent to their imaginations the grotesque figure of poor monsieur Scarron, and they will have my portrait exactly ; with what may not improbably be thought a circumstance of aggravation to my disadvantage, that of being near sixty years of age.

However, if under this uncouth form, I am destitute of the supreme felicity of being thought an object of envy by my own sex, I have at the same time the pleasure of knowing that I am freed too from all the dangerous embarrassment of
its.

its many unhappy consequences ; and can at least boast the consolation of finding the friendship of the other sex to be without design : I can also safely venture to affirm, even in defiance of that received maxim, of the world's regarding us favourably for being happy, yet hating us heartily at the same time for appearing so, that I am nevertheless in full possession of all the felicity my present state is capable of admitting ; and therefore if the ladies should be inclined to give me credit upon this occasion, yet at any time feel the naughty passion of envy beginning to rise in their angelic bosoms, I must take the liberty to desire, that they will only cast one single glance on the amiable picture of monsieur Scarron, and they will in an instant be perfectly reconciled both to themselves and me.

I should now enter upon the subject of this work ; but as I think the present chapter is already of a convenient length, I shall defer it to the next.

C H A P. II, and III.

A Sketch of the characters of Belinda and Tradewell; in her's, the fatal misfortune of vanity, and the immoderate love of pleasure is obviated in the impropriety of merely a superficial and fashionable education; in his, the absurdity of an alliance, where beauty alone is made the chief object of attraction, without any regard to the qualities of the heart and mind: with a few remarks on boarding-schools, and the indispensable necessity of the cosmetick.

IN order to elucidate the subject of this work, and give my readers by degrees the amplest conviction of the efficacy of my cosmetick, I shall be obliged, from time to time, to take the liberty of introducing, not only my own history, but also that of several of my family and friends: but I here utterly disavow the base intention of dealing in scandal and defamation, though so fashionable at present, and at the same time so mistakenly supposed to be a proper method of doing honour to virtue: most of the persons, whose characters are exhibited, or at all glanced at in this work, were my near relations, and have been long since deceased; and

and such of them as are yet in being, have not only given me their free permission, but have long importun'd me to undertake it, so that an apology to them would be unnecessary: if others, how highly soever elevated by fortune or rank, shall happen to receive a random-shot from the exposure of vice and folly, the most effectual cure I can recommend for such a wound, and indeed the most grateful compensation I desire for my own trouble, will be the amendment of their lives.

I have the satisfaction of hoping that I shall hardly be thought guilty of much arrogance, or ostentation, by introducing only my own relatives and friends upon this occasion, when I previously declare, that, in point of genealogy, I am so unhappily circumstanced, as not to be able to boast, with the least pretence of justice, the honour of an alliance, how remote soever, with any of our illustrious nobility; notwithstanding that at present they happen to be so extremely numerous throughout the three kingdoms: for alas! by my father's side, I most unfortunately am of French extraction, though indeed by my mother's, of one of the best, and most antient families in the West of England.

My

My father dying while I was yet an infant, my mother remained a widow but a very short time, for the agreeable Polydore stept in,

With his receipt for making smiles,
And blanching fables into bridal bloom.

But she surviv'd her first husband so little while, that I became an orphan without being sensible that I had lost my parents : my father bore universally the character of an honest, good-natured man ; but as he married for love (as the phrase is) he thought he could not act more prudently, than by leaving both his fortune and daughter in the care of his beloved wife : whether this confidence was justly founded, I submit to the judicious reader ; for I have already inform'd him, that she married again very suddenly, and, as if by the wise example of her first husband, put her whole fortune, with that of her daughter likewise, into the possession of a gentleman, whose character I shall give in the following sheets.

But though I observed that my father married for love, I must not however be so unjust to my mother's family as to have it inferred from thence that she had no fortune, whereas at the death of her father, though not before, she was entitled to

to a very large one : her father, who was of a genteel and learned profession, had moreover inherited a good paternal estate in the West of England : he had married the daughter of a gentleman, as remarkable for his great probity and knowledge, as for the eminent station he filled in the law, for he was certainly an ornament to the bench he had the honour to sit on. My mother's father having acquired a considerable addition to his fortune by his great skill in his profession, chose to purchase another estate in the north of England, near the native place of his lady, where he built and improv'd a very fine seat ; and both these estates he settled on my mother when she married.

My father, 'tis true, was nothing more than a merchant, but then he was in very eminent business, with a fair character, and long established intercourse of credit. Many gentlemen in his own way of business would have thought themselves extremely happy in his alliance, and to that purpose had often offered their sisters and daughters ; but all were rejected for my mother, whom I shall here call the fair Belinda : and yet Tradewell's family (for that was my father's name) beheld his attachment to this lady with the utmost concern ; for they were too prudent to
be

be captivated with beauty, though joined at the same time to the certain prospect of a large fortune, which however they wanted not ; they wisely judg'd that a fine face, an elegant shape, great vivacity, and an air of politeness, all which they acknowledged she possessed in the highest degree, were still not the only requisites in a good wife ; they thought that some few domestic virtues were likewise absolutely necessary to constitute that character ; especially as most of the ladies in their own families had happily attained to that standard, having always joined the valuable to the beautiful. But it so happened that my mother's family also took the alarm at this match ; and either were, or at least pretended to be, violently offended at my father's presumption ; they thought it much too mean a condescension to suffer her to listen to the addresses of a merchant, and one too who was the descendant of a vile French refugee ; they seemed to have far higher views for her, and did not in the least doubt, but that a coronet would wait her acceptance ; they disdained therefore to contaminate their high blood by any alliance with a plebeian, and a mechanic, as they were pleased to call him.

Yet

Yet it is highly probable that all this warm opposition on both sides only serv'd to increase, if not a mutual passion in the young people, it at least certainly inflam'd that of Tradewell, for his assiduity became daily greater : 'till at last, as if by mere dint of perseverance, he gain'd the fair Belinda : both parties, I suppose, gave up something, and concurred at length, though involuntarily ; for the nuptials were celebrated in our great metropolis, with a remarkable eclat and magnificence : but alas ! Plutus, I fear, and not Cupid, lighted up the hymeneal torch that conducted Belinda to the altar ; for besides Tradewell's flourishing state of business, and the possessions he had already realiz'd, which were very considerable, he had well-grounded expectations from an uncle, who resided in the Indies, that had always promised to make him his heir ; and thus by marrying Tradewell, Belinda's views were still not altogether unambitiously extended, notwithstanding the vast imaginary prospects that had been so fondly conceived for her by her affectionate parents ; for the loss of which she very wisely consol'd herself by the poet's advice,

The woes of wedlock with the joys we mix,
'Tis best repenting in a coach and six.

But

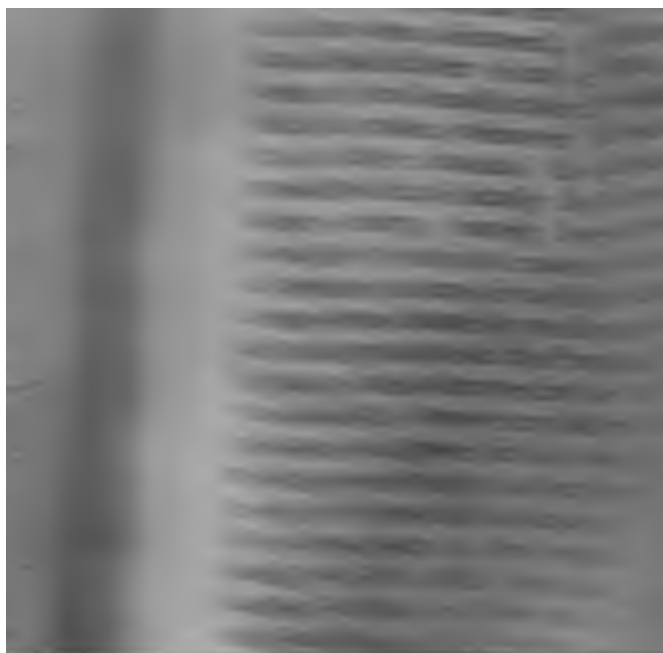
But then she was young, vain, fond of admiration, loved shew and expence, and had been greatly flattered, nay, I believe, almost adored; for she seemed to expect, as I have been informed, that her husband should adhere so far at least to the tenets of the Romish church, as to lay aside his reason, whenever he addressed her, his deity : but alas ! she might have recollected that his family had fled their native country, merely because they would not be forced to renounce the use of reason in matters of worship, and had always been actuated by too strong a bias to the principles of the Protestant religion, to think that even the fair Belinda was infallible : however my father's fondness and indulgence for her was carried to the greatest height, and yet I am sorry to say, that her affection for him held but the second place in her heart, for her vanity had the first ; not that Belinda wanted talents to have rendered her a most valuable, as she certainly was a most agreeable woman : far from it, she was generally allowed to have a great deal of wit ; but what is wit, unless it be directed to some laudable end ? 'tis a mere petulance, a wanton, frivolous impertinence ; the utmost latitude a woman of honour should dare to allow herself, in the use of this

this dangerous talent, should be, at least not to offend: and if she attempts to please, even that should be done with great moderation; for by making other people laugh too frequently, we very seldom make ourselves esteemed. How justly has a favourite poet, before quoted, delineated the glaring impropriety of a woman's affecting to shine in the character of a wit;

Nor make to dang'rous wit a vain pretence,
But wisely rest content with modest sense,
For wit, like wine, intoxicates the brain,
Too strong for feeble woman to sustain.
Of those that claim it more than half have none
And half of those that have it are undone.

C H A P. III.

THE extreme negligence we are guilty of in the education of our daughters, is a matter of more real concern, than the generality of mankind, from their being so long habituated to the evils derived from thence, seem to comprehend; and though I would have it clearly understood here, that I am very far from insinuating a necessity for our having a learned education, yet I would, at the same time, have it not forgot, that



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 coetation, impertinence and grimace.

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The whole force of emulation among such numbers is most unhappily directed to a mistaken purpose, to the purpose of vanity alone ; not to the real improvement of the mind, that would subdue that vanity : the important care of forming their principles to a rectitude of virtue from just motives, is in a manner utterly neglected ; it is true indeed, they are commanded to look upon certain actions as wrong and immoral, but then, I believe, the true motive to a compliance with their duty on such occasions, is neither properly pointed out to them, nor sufficiently explain'd; and I am very much afraid, that the sanction of all such prohibitions is generally honoured less from conviction, and a sense of virtue, than from the dread of reputation ; so that when the purpose of female education is once finally accomplish'd, in that supreme gratification of their vanity, the marrying to advantage, and that bugbear, which they were so long taught to apprehend with terror, in a great measure removed, I should be glad to know upon what motive their virtue is to operate, or whether they are only just then to begin to learn the principles of virtue.

The men in general indeed, when they like women well enough to marry them, take it for granted, that they have been sufficiently instructed in the business of virtue by their good mothers and grandmothers; and tho' they too frequently happen to find themselves mistaken in this point, by discovering that their ladies have had the more important advantage of a boarding-school education, which judiciously rejects every thing so awkward as virtue, yet how strongly soever inclined most of the gentlemen may be to the exercise of arbitrary dominion within their own territories, few of them however, I believe, chuse to give themselves the trouble of exercising at least that branch of it which consists in the benificent office of becoming school-masters to their beloved mates, who generally indeed think themselves already too perfectly accomplish'd to require it: and thus the errors in female education are most unhappily propagated on from generation to generation, in spite of the many known evils that are constantly produced from thence.

But to return to my history, from whence I ask my reader's pardon, for having so long digress'd; the gay, the thoughtless Belinda was indeed a most

melancholly example of the evils above complained of; she had been educated in all the inordinate expence of vanity and fashion, and had contracted so incurable a propensity to extravagance and dissipation, that oeconomy and discretion could never find a place in the catalogue of her virtues: how improper a wife then must she have been, not only for the frugal, the industrious Tradewell, but indeed for any other man, let his fortune have been ever so great? For that habitude to profuseness and expence in a woman was ever judged by men of sense to be the certain indication of a loose mind: and surely the good opinion of fools, purchased too at so high a price, ought to be no part of a woman's ambition: how wretched, how infectious an example must the unhappy Belinda have exhibited to her children, had she lived till they were perceptive of its noxious influence? That she preserved her nuptial vow inviolate, tho' an undeniable truth, was however, from the levity of her conduct, rendered greatly liable to suspicion; yet it was certainly no honour to that virtue, if such it can be call'd, that it should be owing still less to its own intrinsic dignity, and less also to her affection for one of the best husbands

bands in the world, than merely to the peculiar care of providence, that in all her unguarded moments watch'd over her indiscretion.

Yet the fond, the generous Tradewell fought, by every effort of endearing kindness, to conciliate, if possible, a mutual return of that affection, which he was now too sensible his personal merit had never been the object of; but this, alas ! he fought in vain ; for he was soon convinced that merely by the force of an improper education Belinda had been so long habituated to a course of levity, and the absence of all reflection, that her sensibility was not to be awakened by any proof of tenderness in his power : the anguish he felt upon the fatal disappointment of his happiness, upon the certainty of finding himself unable, with all his endeavours, to touch her wayward heart, had so sensibly affected his health and spirits, that he very soon became the martyr of his ill-fated passion ; from the influence of which, even in the hour of death, he could not detach himself, for he invested her by his last-will with his whole fortune, and the care of his only surviving child.

But Belinda, tho' now in full possession of those two great sources of worldly

on her tender mind, as yet receptive of truth, such a sense of the obligations of religion as was adequate to her comprehension; all other duties, how obligatory soever, being still inferior to that we owe to the Supreme Being; and, as far as I have hitherto proceeded with her, I have had the satisfaction of proving experimentally the truth of this remark, that when religion is once thoroughly engraven on the heart, the virtues will all flow happily from thence, as from their natural source.

My Celia already practices all the duties of life in their respective order that can properly fall within her sphere: but I thought it not sufficient to oblige her barely to do her duty, I have also brought her to love it, by convincing her judgment of the reasonableness and utility of its motives; by this means her judgment, being gradually improved, concurs always with her inclination, and her affection for me gives an additional relish for what I advise: I have likewise the happiness of observing that her complexion receives daily an additional bloom from the secret operation of my cosmetic, and doubt not in the least, but by an invariable perseverance in this application, it will at last attain an irresistible lustre.

When.

When young women enter into the world, there is an absolute necessity that they should be strongly fortified with religion ; the pretence to virtue is but a mockery without it, and beauty without virtue is too notoriously the source of misfortune and infamy : it will be no less an help to them against the weakness of youth, than a certain refuge and consolation against the inevitable miseries of old age : but I would not however be understood to recommend the practice of this great duty, as blended either with superstition or enthusiasm ; no, my sentiments on this occasion are such as fill me with love and hope, such as give me a prospect of an happy futurity ; in a word, such as reconcile all seasons and all accidents, such as ensure all the duties of life, and not only answer for me to myself, but are likewise my inviolable guarantees in regard to all my fellow-creatures.

C H A P. IV.

Learning, in the latitude of that word, no part of female character; yet in one branch of it they may be very profitably instructed: Cato's opinion of virtue and beauty; the efficacy of the cosmetick successfully founded on that opinion: virtue, as it is generally practis'd, either egregiously misunderstood, or condemn'd; the partial practice thereof allow'd to claim no more merit from thence, than one fine feature in a face can justly be allow'd to constitute the essence of beauty; when all the rest happen to be extremely plain; the constant use of the cosmetick changes deformity itself into beauty, corrects all the impertinent excrescences of fashion and false taste, both in dress and manners, and gives to native simplicity and neatness no inconsiderable share in the power of female attraction.

I Believe I shall not appear to stand single in my opinion, when I declare, that I think learning, in the extensive sense of that word, is no part of a woman's character; the study of what are called the sciences, or an application to mathematical, physical, or metaphysical dif-

disquisitions, is, I think, as incongruous to the true character of a woman, let her rank in life be what it will, as if she should be unhappily inspired with the boisterous ambition of becoming a general-officer: much is certainly due to information, and likewise much to amusement; and yet, with all the efforts of experience and observations in my power, I am not able to discover, when the necessary offices of life are punctually fulfilled, how a woman, of whatsoever rank or fortune, can have sufficient avocation for the indulgence of either, at least to such a degree in the literary way, as to render her anxious for the distinctions of fame: such improvements in wisdom as would make her perform those respective offices to greater advantage, (from which in strictness no station is exempt) would be of infinitely greater importance, and a much more convincing proof of a solidity of judgment, which is the summit that all men of sense so ardently aspire at; and to female emulation here, I have not the least objection.

There is indeed one particular branch of learning, which, I think, may with infinite advantage be cultivated by the ladies; as it is easily within the comprehension of all, whom the present Gothic

mode of education hath not left quite illiterate; I mean the study of morality : by a diligent application to this single branch, they will have no occasion to give themselves the trouble of resorting to difficult problems, to be convinced by mathematical demonstration of a truth which their looking-glasses had but ten thousand times before informed them of, viz. that all beauty arises from symmetry and proportion.

But unhappily for us, these transient experiments, however just in themselves, reach not conviction ; self-love instantaneously adjusts and reconciles every obliquity that is the least unamiable, it softens disproportion into beauty, and too often cruelly flatters beauty itself into real deformity, without our seeming to be sensible of the fatal change : whereas the science I am now recommending to them, faithfully exposes all the delusions of self-love, restrains the fond excursions of partiality, and fixes the standard of beauty, not indeed in the vague fancy of every undistinguishing beholder, but fixes it, with the philosopher, in the just rule of proportion, in that genuine beauty of character that results from a propriety of action.

The

The wise, the venerable Cato, was so strongly convinced of the force of this opinion, that he thought virtue had essentially in itself the surprising power of changing all the horror of ugliness into beauty ; he thought that habits of goodness, as they ripened into perfection, by degrees made plain people grow extremely handsome, and the beautiful themselves quite angelic ; he pronounced one of the handsomest men in Rome, whose life had been incorrigibly profligate, to be a monster, frightful even to behold ; for vice, he said, had visibly distorted every native lineament of beauty into all the hideousness of deformity..

Whether Cato could account physically for such a metamorphosis, I really am not philosopher enough to determine ; but certain I am, from long observation, that a sweetness of manners, which results from the practice of virtue, diffuses something so amiable over the whole person, as very suddenly changes the disadvantageous opinion we had conceiv'd at first sight, and raises such a pleasing fascination in the eyes of every spectator, as soon substitutes elegance in the place of deformity ; not unlike the agreeable sensation we are apt to be affected with, when the genial power of
C. 6 the

the sun suddenly dispels the gloom of some thick cloud that had before obscured the horizon, and cruelly intercepted all the cheering influence of its lustre.

Even thus powerful is the efficacy of my cosmetick ; it instantly corrects every hideous distortion of the features, that casually arises from the several unhappy passions of envy, pride, malice, or rage ; it polishes every unlucky asperity that has been occasioned by the small-pox, and gives a vivid bloom to the complexion ; it points, in short, the sparkling of the eye, and lights up the whole countenance into all the grace and amiableness of true beauty.

And this, I hope, will appear from conviction, to be a sufficient encouragement, not only to attempt, but also to persevere in the use of it ; for it is only from a resolute perseverance therein that the patient can receive any considerable benefit : a particular detail of the several ingredients, of which this inestimable specific is compounded, I may possibly, for the emolument of my female readers (as I presume not to know that the gentlemen require it) throw into the convenient form of a short recipe, in some part of this work, that may always be ready for application, as the medicines
will

will always be at hand ; with this additional advantage, that they are always to be had without expence ; which however to some ladies may perhaps be no recommendation of their excellence, but as the world goes, it must at least be admitted as a proof of the doctor's integrity : how urgent, in short, may be the necessity for such a specific, let all those fair ones prudently consider, who have not as yet utterly disavowed all hopes of happiness in the married-state ; and indeed I would on no account have any of them despair, as they have the comfortable encouragement of being assured, that I have known it do wondrous execution even at the venerable period of sixty-three.

Its happy effects are presently discovered in the agreeable air, both of the countenance and manner ; but then it must always be remembred, that this is only in proportion to the force of its operation, as well on the understanding as the will ; for although female grace and elegance be as regular emanations from virtue, as heat and light are from the sun ; yet the bare affectation of virtue is very soon detected, and proves to be, like paint, nothing more than the base mimickery of beauty ; that, instead

of improving, only disgraces all its native charms, and actually disgusts, while it intends to captivate the beholders.

And here indeed I cannot help remarking how much the true merit of female virtue seems to be, either generally misunderstood, or estimated merely as an object of contempt ; for how unanimously soever the fair may possibly admire it in speculation, yet from the conduct of most of them, one would be apt to infer, that the practice must be either extremely improper, or absolutely impossible : they suppose it to comprehend (and so far indeed they suppose not unjustly) a great variety of particular branches, which so rigorously enjoin the duty of self-denial, that a uniform obedience thereto is rendered utterly inconsistent with their notions of happiness ; and therefore they would ingeniously compound for the omission of, perhaps, every other branch, by the rigid observance of one only ;

So sweet is that one crime they don't pursue,
To pay its loss they think all others few.

But I would wish them to consider whether the sparkling lustre of the finest eye can sufficiently apologise for the horrid picture of deformity that may possibly be exhibited at the same time over all the
other

other features; such as a most enormous expanse of mouth, a striking prominence of nose, a most unamiable profile, and the complexion of mahogany: or indeed, whether the most beautiful-turned face, with the fairest complexion, can always display its charms to advantage, and penetrate successfully through the misfortune of a most ungracious obliquity in the eyes: there is a certain degree of loveliness resulting from the happy consistence of virtue, as well as beauty, which operates as forcibly on the judgment in one case, as on the imagination in the other; and it is the exact propriety of this consistence that constitutes the real essence of both.

I have often remarked, with no small concern, that there are some virtues, which, when carried to a certain height, are most absurdly supposed, by the too credulous possessors, to reflect so profuse a splendor, as to dazzle the eyes of every beholder, and divert them from the detection of many glaring defects; such, for instance, as an heroic chastity in a woman; but let not the ladies too fondly think this the perfect quintessence of all the virtues; for though it is certainly a very great one, without which the practice of all others would indeed be vain,

'tis however but partially such, as in that case it can regard nothing but her own glory, and therefore loses by much the greatest part of its lustre, if not attended by the social assemblage of all the other virtues.

By practising this single virtue with all the rigid punctuality of a Vestal, we are vainly apt to imagine, that we effectually answer all the ends of society, relative to our sex; while alas! we often continue still proud, envious, wrathful, and censorious; incontinently addicted to a life of fashionable trifling, and to pleasures, which only serve to convince us, by wretched experience, that they have not the power to make us happy.

I would by no means have a woman neglect any of the accomplishments, or ornaments of her person, that may be justly thought conducive to the important end of rendering herself agreeable; but then I would have her attention judiciously directed also to the still more important consideration of acquiring a solid merit: as the real graces do certainly depend not upon a studied finery, I would endeavour to convince my fair countrywomen, that a remarkable extravagance in the article of dress, though perhaps strictly consistent with their fortunes, is
by

by no means a proof of their elegance; and if it engrosses too much of their time, it becomes then unpardonably criminal.

'Tis true, we must submit to the fashion, as to a troublesome sort of slavery, but then we should comply with its injunctions no farther than we are obliged in decency to do: to derive a pleasure from the rapid vicissitudes of fashion in point of dress, and instantly indulge in every whimsical change that is invented by a certain weathercock nation, is to me a much stronger proof of levity, than of true taste; for if we really have such a true taste, it should rather instruct us how to avoid too studied a minuteness, as well as all the little redundancies of an excessive niceness in that particular; and convince us likewise that trifles should always be treated only as they deserve: but, whatever may be the fashion, neatness and simplicity are always indispensable, because they are always highly agreeable, and very justly deserve to be ranked, not last, amongst those female powers that are esteemed the most attractive.

C H A P. V.

Reasons for discontinuing sometimes the regular course of the little history carried on in this work: the insufficiency of mere external charms in the important business of making, and preserving a worthy conquest on the other sex, illustrated in the character of the lovely Angelica: vanity generally the guide, and as generally the destruction of beauty.

THOUGH I shall often, perhaps, take the liberty of discontinuing the regular course of the little history I propos'd giving in this work, relative to myself and some of my friends, I shall nevertheless be always careful to resume it in its proper place; and I here beg leave to assure my fair readers, that any occasional digressions I may possibly make from thence, shall only be in order to introduce such reflections as, I think, grow naturally out of the favorite subject, which I have undertaken to recommend to their peculiar patronage; and likewise to exhibit, from time to time, the most instructive parts of such characters, as are the properest to illustrate such a subject, the more effectually still to evince the utility of my cosmetick.

But

But whilst I am endeavouring to conduct this point to the best advantage in my power, I hope, instead of their favour, which it would be my first ambition to deserve, I shall not have the mortification to incur their censure or displeasure; either by my manner of treating this subject, or by what some people may, perhaps, think too great a degree of gravity in the sentiments: I confess, I cannot help looking upon every-thing that tends either towards the improvement, or debasement of my own sex, as an object of too much importance to be treated quite ludicrously, or with an indecent levity; because, I think, 'tis making, rather too free with the dignity of virtue, as well as prostituting, in some sense, the delicacy of female character, that ought always to be held sacred, as it is in some degree the representative of chastity; but, upon this particular occasion, it would be absolutely defeating the desirable end it was intended to promote.

I very ardently wish to have all my fair country-women be in reality, what, I am sorry to say, too many of them at present affect to be only in appearance; and as I would on no account have the charms of real beauty defrauded of the reward of perfect admiration, by any imputed deceitfulness.

ceitfulness in that appearance, I would consequently have the ladies always think and act with such a degree of elegance and propriety, as might justly claim the approbation of the judgment, at the same time that they were endeavouring but barely to attract that of the eye; for however lovely they may appear in person, adorned with every outward charm that womankind can boast, in form all angel, yet if the native beauties of the mind have either been neglected, or cruelly perverted into downright deformity, by the violence of a wrong education, nothing can preserve their empire long; the sparkling lustre of those eyes, that shone so lately like that of some glorious star, soon dwindles into the uncertain gleam of a contemptible meteor; marriage instantly puts an end, not only to all the conscious triumph of their charms, but perhaps to all their other flattering prospects of felicity.

'Tis too well known, that love generally measures the periods of its duration but in proportion to the degree of esteem on which it is founded; and certainly happiness without it but mocks the wedded pair; nor indeed can all the haughty pomp of beauty with justice be allowed to merit such a blessing, when it is found to be deficient in that most essential

tial of all charms, that of being the worthy object of a husband's confidence and esteem : let every woman therefore firmly believe that she hears the irrevocable decree of reason and judgment, the universal sense, at least of all the judging part of mankind, pronounced in those fine lines of Mr. Addison.

Tis not a set of features, or complexion,
The tincture of a skin that we admire,
Beauty soon grows familiar to the lover,
Fades in his eye, and palls upon the sense ;
The virtuous Marcia towers above her sex,
True, she is fair, Oh, how divinely fair,
But still the lovely maid improves her charms,
With inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,
And sanctity of manners.

In the celebrated, the more than lovely Angelica, we behold a most unhappy instance of the truth asserted above ; it is well known that the beauty of her person, exclusive of every other circumstance of attraction, was the sole cause of her elevation to the rank she now possesses ; and indeed, if mere beauty, in the most exalted conception of that word, if the most exquisite composition of flesh and blood, unassisted by the nobler faculties of the mind, can justly merit such distinction, most undoubtedly Angelica does ;

In

In framing whom heaven took unusual care,
 As its own image, it design'd her fair,
 And form'd her by the best lov'd angel there.

But alas! how deplorably have the gracious intentions of heaven been frustrated in this master-piece of its workmanship; for the mind of Angelica is as an uncultivated field, where follies of every kind, like weeds, spring up spontaneous; 'tis to her eyes exactly what the reverse of a foil would be to a diamond, instead of heightening, it but diminishes their lustre; never sure was contrast stronger, yet never did things contrasted operate with such odd effect; they both seem to have the power, not indeed of setting off, but merely of debasing each other, never was so much loveliness so wretchedly disgraced.

Had proper care been taken of her education, she might have been the greatest ornament of her age, for even envy must allow her person to be faultless; whereas at present her lord, who is a man of sense, is ashamed of her, when in company, and weary of her when alone: 'tis no uncommon thing to hear the judging part of the male world cry out, whenever she appears in public (which by the way is much too often) What pity it is, so fine
 a head

a head should be so empty; and this proves a precedent for the cruel compassion of the other sex, that is in truth nothing but the result of burning envy.

Would Angelica, even at this time, have recourse to the friendly assistance of the cosmetick, would she yet endeavour to fill her mind with useful knowledge, she might soon be able to entertain herself with reflections upon her own ideas, without being oppressed with spleen and vapours, when not in public, or obliged to seek unsatisfactory relief from the mere vanity of trifles: the faculties of her soul would become enlarged by her being accustomed to think, and she would confess, that to spend an evening with an ingenious author was, sometimes at least, an entertainment preferable even to a masquerade, the absurdity of sauntering away so much time in the vain parade of public gardens, or the pernicious amusement of constant parties at cards.

She would by degrees come to reflect upon the impropriety of her conduct, she would soon perceive the horrid change that folly and indiscretion are capable of working in beauty, and acknowledge the force of truth in what a favourite poet hath asserted,

And

And yet how few have learnt, when this is given,
 Not to disgrace the partial boon of heaven ;
 How few with all their pride of form can move,
 How few are lovely.

This would justly rouse her indignation, and oblige her to summon all her prudence to avenge the cruel insults offered to her beauty ; this would indeed be the triumph of true beauty ; her lord would then adore her, her real friends would all esteem her ; she would in short become then as universally the object of real admiration, as she is now that of base envy, impotent ridicule, and affected compassion.

Forbid, kind heaven, that vanity do e'er obstruct this prudent resolution ; vanity, so commonly observed to be the chief minister of beauty, proves alas ! as the ministers of princes too frequently do, the most insidious of its foes ; it cannot bear, no more than they, a rival near the throne, and therefore labours, with every subtle insinuation of artifice and false allurements, to banish from thence, as they do truth, the faithful service of reflection. To the bewitching power of this same vanity, as to some goddess, the tutelary guardian of beauty, and sole dispenser of all earthly bliss, the fair intensely pay
 their

their pious adorations ; in spite too of that conviction, which daily observation so constantly affords them, that however pleasant and agreeable other parts of this worship may appear, the sacrifice most commonly proves fatal ; for hence the sad havoc of misconduct, hence oft' the loss of fame and virtue, and sometimes, as in the case of the hapless Belinda, that of life also ; and hence, in short, flow all the real ills of thoughtless, unpremeditated indiscretion.

CHAP. VI.

Some part of the authoreſs's ſtory recited; her reasons for giving any part of it at all; part of the character of Sir John Meanwell and his lady.

IF my fair readers, for whose emolument alone, or at least for whose amusement, I have undertaken this task, will now permit me, without the imputation of egotism, to mention myself, I shall proceed to relate some of the occurrences of my own life; not that in doing this, I would be understood, either to flatter them into the expectations of being entertained with scenes of gallantry, and

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extraordinary adventures (as I happen to have no particular passion for the marvellous) nor yet by any insinuation of mine to appear guilty of the ridiculous presumption of proposing myself as a pattern of discretion to my sex; very far from both; my whole design, in giving any part of my own history, being no other than to point out, on the one hand, such circumstances in the conduct of those persons, with whom I was connected, as may possibly be thought in some measure conducive to the reformation of certain foibles and irregularities in my fair country-women, which greatly injure beauty, without doing any honour to virtue: and such on the other hand, as may most essentially enhance the true interests of both; my part in the drama being, in my own opinion, too inconsiderable to merit much attention.

As I was thought too young at the death of my mother to be sent to a boarding-school, I remained for some time in the house of my father-in-law, whose tenderness and affectionate care of me, during that period of my infant state (from whatever motive it proceeded) I still continue to reflect on with pious gratitude to his memory; but as soon as he judg'd that I was of a proper age, not knowing, I pre-

I presume, how to dispose of me better, he began to make all the necessary preparations for placing me at one of the most fashionable of these seminaries for female education; and indeed to me this appeared by much the most desirable circumstance that could possibly have happened at the time; for my imaginations, too apt to be suddenly heated through inexperience, had credulously represented it as a scene of life that was every way redundant with felicity, the novelty whereof had charms too powerful for youthful innocence to resist, or easily to detect the fond delusion:

From whence I often take occasion to reflect, with what complacency the noon and evening of our lives might glide serenely on, could we but strictly account for all our morning actions according to the dictates of reason; if the warmth and impetuosity of youth could earlier be inured to discipline, and tempered with a little more consideration, most certainly a greater rectitude of judgment would soon ensue; every passion would, from conviction, be duly restrained within its proper province, and every object estimated only according to its real worth; how easy would it then be to avoid at least many of those ills which most of us

endure at present, how few would be the wretched? But, this, I fear, from the unhappy turn of our education, is a blessing only to be wished, not to be expected.

Not long before I was to set out for the destined scene of my education, I received a friendly visit from Sir John Meanwell and his lady, who had also been before to pay their compliments to Polydore and myself upon the death of Belinda: Sir John was very nearly related to Tradewell; he saw, he pitied the helpless orphan, and imagined that in his family I should find an asylum, secure from that variety of misfortunes, which are too often the unmerited lot of female youth and innocence: he well knew that I was entitled to a very large fortune, and entertained from thence, as is but too commonly done, some very ambitious notions in my favour; while heaven (I recollect it with grateful veneration) had much better things in store for me.

Sir John's great partiality for his lady, whom he had but lately married, and was fond of to excess, made him conclude that she was perfectly equal to the task of forming my mind to the best advantage; and he therefore proposed it as a scheme far more eligible than that of the boarding-school, that I should receive my whole edu-

education at his house ; which Polydore very readily agreed to, being thoroughly satisfied to be delivered from the care of my person, as he still continued to have, what appeared to him of much greater importance, that of my fortune ; what consequences this resolution was attended with in regard to me, will appear in the sequel ; but before I proceed farther, I must in justice confess, that from the whole of Sir John's behaviour to me, I constantly experienced every mark of paternal tenderness and affection ; for indeed he was a man of the strictest probity, honour, and benevolence ; with an excellent understanding well improved ; he had an estate in land of full three thousand pound a year, with a very considerable sum of ready money besides.

To his house then I was immediately conducted by himself and his lady, where I was soon initiated, under the pretence of receiving a most excellent education, into all the then reigning follies and vanities of the age ; but as this circumstance must appear greatly inconsistent with the character I have already given of Sir John, it must be observed that the business of the senate engrossed so much of his time (for he was not a false patriot) that generally in the seasons of parliament we had

very little of his company : and whenever he had the least relaxation from thence, he always retired into the country ; as he often used to say, that ceremony, pomp, and noise were the certain enemies of true happiness : besides, his extreme fondness for lady Meanwell begot in him such a complaisance for her opinion upon all occasions, and indeed so intire an approbation of her conduct in every part thereof, as inclined him to believe, for a very considerable time, that she could not possibly err ; but her ladyship seldom accompanied him in these retirements from town, indeed never but when she could not well avoid it, by the town's growing too empty for a person of her fashion to continue in it, and then her will was in all things an absolute law to Sir John.

Lady Meanwell was the daughter of a wealthy citizen of London, who had, by his own industry, some lucky hits in trade, and the death of a near relation without issue, acquired as considerable a property as most commoners in England ; she was, it must be confessed, extremely handsome, exactly well-shaped, and perfectly genteel ; and had moreover what might justly be called a very polite address ; but with all this, she had nothing more than a fashionable understanding, that is to say, she

she expressed her thoughts in very pretty language, but had never acquired the faculty of thinking right; her conversation upon trifles was generally agreeable, but then her conceptions seldom rose above the mere drapery of the species; she was an utter stranger to those embellishments of the heart and mind, which might render even us women sometimes truly illustrious in ourselves, and useful to other people; and therefore it is not at all a matter of surprise, that her ladyship was always more attentive to the superficial parts of life, than to the real, the substantial blessings thereof.

The extraordinary degree of indulgence, with which she had been hitherto treated by Sir John, served but to confirm the taint of those principles, which she had unhappily imbib'd from a wrong education; and as these had in a great measure depriv'd her of the power, so had that almost of the will, to judge of any-thing otherwise than through the false medium of caprice, and a perverted imagination; from whence she soon began to look upon her husband as little better than a sort of convenient steward, a purveyor for her vanity and extravagance: she considered the inspection of domestic affairs as a vile occupation, absolutely incompatible with

the character of a woman of fashion ; she thought life most ingloriously consumed in her own family, except when she was surrounded with a crowd of expensive visitants, and fancied herself out of the world when-ever she miss'd the opera, or drawing-room ; she despis'd all the truly valuable part of her own sex, and call'd every woman a poor, mean-spirited, unpolished wretch, who happened to be actuated by discretion, who was wise enough to prefer the tranquil, self-possessing scenes of domestic happiness, to the giddy, the tumultuous rapture of living constantly in a public rout ; in short, who regarded the administration of her family as an indispensable duty.

Lady Meanwell was, however, possessed of many charms and accomplishments that, had her mind been equally improved, might have rendered her perfectly amiable ; but, as the case stood, they only serv'd to set some very material defects in a still more conspicuous point of view ; she was, for instance, a very great proficient in the science of music, and joined to a natural good voice all the aids of art ; but then she was, on this occasion, unhappily inspired with all the affectation of superior taste, with that of appearing a perfect connoisseur

noïſſeur in that ſcience, which incurred a much greater degree of extravagance, both in point of time and expence, than was conſiſtent with prudence, or could be approv'd by any affectionate huſband, that was, at the ſame time, a reaſonable creature.

She likewise ſpoke both the French and Italian languages with great purity and eaſe; and I mention this circumſtance more by way of doing honour to her ladyſhip's capacity, which undoubtedly was very good, than to have it ſuppos'd that any abuſe could ariſe from thence, to the prejudice of her virtue; tho', indeed, in regard to the latter of theſe languages, if I have been rightly inform'd, (for I underſtand it not myſelf) 'tis ſo far from being uſeful, that I ſhould rather think it, in ſome degree, dangerous for a woman to learn it at all; the Italian writers in general, as I have been told, are not extremely correct; and there is, beſides, in moſt of of their works a certain jingle of words that is too apt to inſpire a looſe imagination, inconſiſtent with that chaſtity of ſentiment that ſhould always be the firſt ornament of a female-mind.

I have thus far endeavour'd, with the ſtricteſt impartiality, to give my fair

readers as just an idea of some part of lady Meanwell's true character as I possibly could, with whom I pass'd several years in the beginning of my life; there is, however, a considerable part of it as yet untold, which shall occasionally be recited; and I assure them in veracity, that the character is not imaginary, nor by any means exaggerated; for in executing this little task, at the request of some of my particular friends, had I been at liberty to have had recourse to the helps of imagination, I might very possibly have appeared in general much more entertaining: but then I must have been less scrupulous in point of probability and fact, and consequently, in their opinion, less instructive, which would disappoint the intention of those friends, to whom I think myself particularly obliged.

Lady Meanwell's picture, so far as I have hitherto faithfully proceeded in it, tho' the likeness is very faithfully preserved, does, however, I should hope, not appear quite so amiable as to attract general admiration, for indeed the truly graceful part, I am sorry to say, is so entirely wanting, that, according to the standard of true beauty, her ladyship must already appear very deformed.

C H A P.

C H A P. VII.

Lady Meanwell's character continued; her ruling passion; the beauty of a fool is rather the object of compassion than love; it hardly excites so much admiration as that of a fine picture; but the beauty of a bad woman is apt to excite both indignation and disgust: the ruinous effects of play in women, both in regard to beauty, health, fortune and reputation; fashion, and the vanity of complying precipitately with all its dictates, first seduced women into the slavery of this destructive amusement, and avarice generally makes fast their chains.

IN the foregoing chapter I gave my fair readers but an imperfect sketch of the character of lady Meanwell; yet such a one as, I hope, has help'd, in some measure, to convince them of the impropriety of her conduct, and consequently how unworthy she was to have enjoyed the blessing of so much beauty, who could, with such ingratitude to the giver, and such insensibility of the true value of the gift, take so much pains to abuse it.

We generally look upon the beauty of a fair idiot with a still smaller degree of

rapturous admiration, than even on that of a fine picture ; because the powers of the imagination, which quicken sensibility, seem for the time to be totally absorb'd in pity, which is the genuine complexion of humanity ; but in regard to the charms of a woman, whose folly is of her own making, the case is widely different ; we there soon perceive, and are justly offended at the outrage that is thus wilfully done to beauty, which in such a state of violation becomes consequently the object of disgust ; the deformity that arises from such a metamorphosis is too striking to admit of any palliation, and the injury too unnaturally cruel to be forgiven.

We may indeed esteem it as a sort of suicide, which, however, in the virgin-state is often not less justly, than severely punished by the stings of ridicule and contempt, but above all by being so frequently condemned to the joyless, the detested solitude of perpetual celibacy ; and even in the married-state likewise, it is often deservedly punished by the neglect, perhaps by the insuperable aversion of a husband, who has at length recovered the use of that judgment, which his imagination had for a time the power only of suspending.

In short, indiscretion is to beauty exactly what hypocrisy is to friendship; they are, both of them, often grievously, perhaps irrecoverably, wounded by the very means which they had too imprudently fix'd on to establish their happiness; whereas a uniform course of virtue alone, by giving constant life and vigour to each, would effectually have answered that end.

But however culpable lady Meanwell's conduct in this respect may possibly appear, yet lest any of my readers should from hence be misled to exaggerate the charge, I must, in justice to her ladyship, confess that she was intirely free from certain great vices, that are sometimes, I am sorry to say, the just reproach of our sex, as well as of the other; she was by no means addicted to that male-vice, I mean the beastly one of intemperance, nor had she any propensity to gallantry; but then her ruling passion was perhaps as dangerous in its consequences, tho' not so shameful in the practice, as either of the former; for, as my favourite poet expresses it,

The ruling passion, be it what it will,
The ruling passion conquers reason still.

Indeed lady Meanwell's was no other than the unhappy love of play; but in
this

this she exceeded all bounds of moderation; if there was nothing more to be condemn'd in this fashionable amusement, than the wretched destruction of so much time, it ought, even on that account, to be esteem'd unpardonable; but how highly is it aggravated by the insatiable desire of entering still deeper? A passion for play, like avarice, which is generally its chief motive, is always observed to increase the more it is indulg'd; and this indeed was exactly the case with her ladyship.

She took no small pains to have me early instructed in the mysteries of this science, as judging it to be an indispensable part of genteel education, and that I could not possibly become otherwise a proper companion for her ladyship, and her company; and indeed so irresistible is the force of youthful habits, when once deeply rooted, that I could not, perhaps, be certain, had not my judgment been strengthened in a peculiar manner, by the unhappy scenes I was a witness to in this family (arising chiefly from the havoc of play) whether it would not be, even at this time, as the royal poet expresses it, the sin that would most easily beset me.

How often have I reflected with astonishment and horror, yet with some degree

degree of pleasure too, on the imminent dangers I escap'd, tho' cruelly expos'd; at so critical a period of life, to idleness, extravagance, and all the seduction of this vice : it was no uncommon thing for me to dissipate in one evening's play, perhaps, a whole quarter's allowance; but in this, as in almost every other irregularity relative to this destructive practice; I had the constant sanction of her ladyship's example to keep me in countenance : in short, I was not left to my passions, but was encouraged to indulge them, and had not providence kindly interfered, I must have been by them betrayed.

I tremble while I recollect the rocks and shelves to which I was here expos'd ; and often wonder how her ladyship, in spite of the repeated experience of past ill fortune, could so obstinately persevere in the road to certain ruin; I have several times been filled with the utmost confusion on her ladyship's account, when I observed the meannesses which a false spirit had oblig'd her to be guilty of on those occasions; particularly in condescending, after an unlucky run, to borrow money, unknown to Sir John, from people whose acquaintance she should rather have look'd upon as the *greatest disgrace*. This

This unhappy passion for play in us women, altho' it is known from conviction to be pregnant with a thousand other ills besides the loss of beauty, is nevertheless, by the pernicious influence of bad example, too frequently indulg'd; the vanity of imitating our superiors, even in things that are palpably wrong, makes us blind to the crime, as well as the absurdity of such a conduct; and the infatuation occasioned by fashion, has, I am certain, seduced many women, at first, into all the mischiefs of play, who would otherwise, with the justest indignation, have avoided it as a vicious practice; this single circumstance of fashion reconciles all the horror of the crime, and raises the dull drudgery of repeated cards, to all the dignity of an elegant amusement.

What effects it may produce among the men, I presume not to enumerate, but as it is not naturally a female vice, I would willingly endeavour to convince my fair country-women, that, as an enhancement of their guilt, they certainly sin doubly by committing it; that they depart from the honour of their sex, renounce absolutely the power of beauty, and too often incur, besides, the ruinous penalties that are common to all losing gamesters:

gamesters : I would, moreover, wish them to be convinced, that play, which seems to be the fashionable vice, as well as folly of the present time, is, in its tendency, the certain destruction of all decorum; the duchess sometimes forgets her dignity, and the modest virgin that reserve which ought to be the constant guardian of her beauty and her honour; it seems, indeed, as if the social virtues had, by the enchanting power of cards, been all perverted into their opposite vices; as if merely, by the prevailing impulse of fashion, people were to meet at certain hours, with all the appearance of complacency, only to murder time, and civilly to cheat, quarrel with, and hate each other : besides, a long continued course of play, especially if deep, is a trial of female probity and honour, so peculiarly unfortunate, that she, who in this case preserves even both unspotted, proclaims not still so much her glory as her shame.

Altho' it may be highly probable, that not a few of my fair readers will look upon what I have been saying, in relation to this pernicious practice, as merely the advice of an unlucky old woman, who is past the sense of pleasure herself, and only envious of those who can en-

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joy it, yet I am not without hopes, that it will more forcibly extort their attention, when they find, that it is sanctified by so great an authority as that of lord Hallifax, who, in his excellent advice to a daughter, particularly places gaming, and the love of play, among those articles of misconduct that are the most destructive of female character.

But what would his lordship think, was he alive, and could observe, that ladies are now so irrevocably attached to the business of cards, as to be obliged to bespeak their parties, perhaps, two months before-hand, for fear of disappointment? How greatly would his lordship admire the eagerness of their industry, while, with horror, he condemn'd the object on which it was employed?

To call this scene of indefatigable industry by so opprobrious an appellation as that of idleness, may possibly be thought, by some ladies, not less an inconsistency than an offence; yet such in truth it is, since, like idleness, it is productive of the greatest mischief, without one good effect; for how insensibly does the love of play, like that of pleasure, seduce the unwary sex into habits of levity and inordinate expence, to the dangerous

gerous irregularity of unseasonable hours, and to the company of people whose acquaintance proves often an infamy to their reputation, if not sometimes even a declaration of war against their virtue: it makes them grow careless as to the point of paying their civilities abroad, where cards are not an inducement to it, and necessarily obliges them to neglect the important duties of domestic life.

When evils like these, and numberless others that could be named, are known to be the certain consequences of women's indulging in this darling amusement, it can hardly be pleaded, in alleviation of their crime, that they play but for a trifle, which can never hurt their fortunes; except, indeed, that they esteem the loss of prudence, modesty, and reputation, as nothing more than such a trifle; which, by this experiment, they cannot but allow, are much too hazardously expos'd to engage the affection of any wise and worthy man; for such a one (and none but such, I am sure, is worthy their attention) would scarcely be inclined to select the partner of his happiness for life, from amidst a circle that had been so long hackney'd through all the naughty purlieus of vanity, riot, and dissipation.

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But when once the stake for which a woman plays, becomes considerable, I tremble for the consequence, her danger is inevitable, and her destruction seems to be decreed by fate: the world think they have always a right to make free with those people who make too free with themselves, and therefore scruple not particularly on such occasions as these, to draw the most frightful inferences that malice, and all the wantonness of censure can suggest; I should be unjust to the merit of my sex's curiosity, to think that my fair country-women could be ignorant of this, and yet I confess myself at a loss how to account for their conduct, in treating the opinion of the world with such contempt, when appearances are often so strongly against them, because I am afraid that it is judged with truth to be seldomer a proof of innocence than guilt.

Be this however as it will; one heinous crime at least they certainly are guilty of in the pursuit of this amusement, which yet, were they but thoroughly sensible of it, I am as certain, they would instantly amend; I prize too justly the real value of my sex's charms, to view with indifference the dreadful ravages that play, like those of some destroying angel, too frequently commits on beauty; but still as

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I presume not, in a matter of such importance, to obtrude my own opinion singly, as the test of truth; I therefore wish my fair readers to consider how strongly it is enforced by the concurrent sentiments of many wise and good men; and it is more than probable that a clear conviction of the crying injuries which beauty too frequently sustains from this pernicious amusement, will at the same time have the power of producing such a degree of conviction, in regard to its moral deformity, as must quite confirm their detestation of the practice.

At least, without such conviction, my cosmetick is utterly precluded from the power of operating with any success; for although it can effectually restore lost beauty, and what is still more extraordinary, engraft it even on deformity itself, the subject must however be properly prepared to be receptive of its efficacy, or all experiment is vain.

As a proof therefore of my desire to promote the happiness as well as the beauty of my fair country-women, and at the same time to confirm my own judgment in regard to the means of doing so on this occasion, I would recommend to them the sentiments of a venerable bard, couched in the following lines; who, fairly
crowned

crowned with wisdom, chants forth his instructive and harmonious lays, beneficently to warn the fair daughters of our isle against this baneful, this deforming vice of play.

Immortal were we, or else mortal quite,
 I less should blame this criminal delight ;
 But since the gay assembly's gayest room
 Is but an upper story to some tomb,
 Methinks we need not our short beings shun,
 And, thought to fly, contend to be undone :
 We need not buy our ruin with our crime,
 And give eternity to murder time.
 The love of gaming is the worst of ills,
 With ceaseless storms the blacken'd soul it fills,
 Inveighs at heaven, neglects the ties of blood,
 Destroys the power, and will of doing good,
 Kills health, pawns honour, plunges in disgrace,
 And, what is still more dreadful, — spoils your
 FACE.

C H A P. VIII.

The detail of Lady Meanwell's conduct continued, and the unhappy catastrophe thereof, with some reflections upon the whole; the authoress's fortunate deliverance from so contagious an example, and her still more fortunate conversion from the principles of vanity and folly; with a few hints relative to matrons.

THERE is scarcely any calamitous consequence to be apprehended from the fatal love of play, especially in
 women,

women, but what the indiscreet lady Meanwell, as will appear in the sequel, too sensibly experienced in her own family, the honour of her husband's bed alone excepted. Her house was situated in the parish of St. James's, that center of pleasure and the beau monde; it was the well-known rendezvous for all the gay and sprightly of either sex, but chiefly for those adventurous spirits who chose to be initiated into the ingenious mysteries of cards; and here indeed the hours danced nimbly away with down upon their feet, and time flew gayly on: for my own part, I was, as I then fondly imagined, at the very height of all human felicity, which, I supposed with her ladyship, to consist only in the unreserved indulgence of every vanity, folly, and extravagance that this great town, so fertile in invention, could possibly produce; for when not engaged at cards, which was however the supreme amusement, we were always sure to be at some of the public diversions, as home and Sir John were now become objects of perfect detestation.

But how severe a mortification would it have been to her ladyship, had she then known, as was really the case, that by appearing so constantly in public,
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the only expos'd her own folly, defeated the whole scheme of admiration, by wearing out the taste of the town, and grew actually contemptible, by being conspicuous : I was, however, too young at that time to be capable of making these reflections : I saw, indeed, by degrees, that things were beginning to go wrong, but guess'd not at the cause ; I remark'd that the baronet appear'd daily more reserv'd than usual, and more liable than ever I had known him before, to be peevish, and out of humour at trifles, while her ladyship grew still more haughty and ill-bred in her behaviour towards him : 'till, at length, Sir John's spirits seem'd to be so greatly affected, that he declar'd his health was sensibly declining, and that a more free and open air was absolutely necessary for the recovery thereof ; he consequently insisted, that his lady and family should shortly retire with him into the country, and reside there wholly for the future.

This was indeed a fatal stroke to lady Meanwell, who had been so long inur'd to a life of pleasure in town, and detest'd the country only because it was incapable of supplying that defect to her ; but above all, because she had no ideas, no fund within herself to render any of
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the more untoward circumstances of solitude tolerable ; there was, however, an indispensable necessity that the baronet should now be peremptory, that his will, on this occasion particularly, should become a law, as irreverfible as thofe of the Medes and Perfians, and therefore comply her ladyfhip muft, and did, tho' not before fhe had fquandered away very confiderable fums at cards, over and above her allowance, which fhe took up of Sir John's trades-people, and parted, befides, with all her jewels for the fame purpofe, that had been purchafed at a prodigious expence.

Not Cicero, when banifhed from his darling Rome, felt more poignant anguifh at that event, than did the haplefs lady Meanwell, when fhe was carried captive to her country-feat, to be immur'd for life, as fhe exprefs'd it, in this her horrid prifon : but as it took up fome time before this refolution could be carried perfectly into execution, I hope, my fair readers are ready to imagine, that her ladyfhip, after fhe had received fo terrible an alarm, employ'd that interval in preparing her mind for the extraordinary change of fcene that fhe was foon to enter on, and in endeavouring, at leaft, to fhew fome difpofition

towards an attonement for her past misconduct; but this, alas ! had not even the smallest portion of her ladyship's attention ; as if intirely unapprehensive of what was certainly to her the dreadful event, which was suddenly to take place, she still persevered in the same round of criminal indiscretion; the infatuation whereof I have several times since reflected on with much amazement ; for altho' her ladyship had by no means an understanding well improv'd, yet certainly she wanted not sense enough to discover the folly, as well as the heinousness of such a conduct.

But I am now convinced, from long observation, that it is a species of infatuation, which even people of the best sense are sometimes unhappily liable to ; which yet I can no otherwise account for, than by imputing it to such a false estimation of happiness, as consists in the gratification of that pride which thinks it contemptible to stoop to any of the suggestions of reason, and therefore in a manner authorises the passions to predominate uncontroll'd ; at least, the surprising spirit of contradiction, by which we observe mankind to be actuated, on many other occasions in life, seems sufficiently powerful to bring the mind

mind into such a state of infatuation: indeed where no such interested gratification of the passions happens to be immediately concerned, the understanding of these people often shines forth to great advantage; yet surely the true dignity of good sense, the test of a sound understanding, is still more justly characteriz'd in making the judgment forcibly subdue all such destructive passions.

I have, at this time, the pleasure of knowing a lady of excellent understanding, who, for a while, had been thus irrationally devoted to the love of cards, but she, (to her honour be it spoken) recovered the use of her judgment before it had been totally depraved; and she not long ago said to me, as we were discoursing upon this subject, that it seem'd now astonishing even to herself, how so many people of first-rate understanding can, with all the insensibility of the stupid, submit to pass away several hours together in shuffling and dividing a pack of cards, with no other ideas, (if we except such as ought not to be suppos'd in such company) but those that are suggested from black and red spots, dispos'd into different figures; and scarcely with any other conversation, than what is generally made up of a few

game-phrases: indeed had it not been a subject rather too serious to be merry upon, I could almost laugh sometimes, to hear these rational beings complain, that life is short, while they are daily taking pains to convince the world, it is so intolerably tedious, that they know not how to employ it better.

But let us consider, for a moment, how deplorable a being this unhappy occasion must have rendered Sir John Meanwell; a man, till now, most amiably fitted every way for the happiness of social and domestic life; depriv'd, as he thus was, of every joy that love and beauty could dispense; disappointed in his most important views of rational happiness, and doom'd to behold the partner whom he chose for life, abandon'd past reclaiming, and in a condition much worse, if possible, than that of being mad: the loss of reason, when it is the act of heaven, demands our tenderest compassion; but sure resentment justly rises against those, who, by sacrificing the soul's most noble faculties to sordid lucre, (and the warmest advocates for gaming, can have nothing more than this to offer in its favour) vilely deform the dignity of human nature.

The confideration of this melancholly subject brings to my remembrance thofe pathetic lines of Milton, which indeed are but too applicable in the cafe of lady Meanwell ;

O faireft of creation ! laft and beft
Of all God's works ! creature, in whom excell'd

Whatever can to fight, or thought be form'd
Holy, divine, good, amiable, or fweet,
How art thou loft.-----

In fhort, by her ladyfhip's extreme imprudence, Sir John, however fevere fuch a reduction muft be, was now oblig'd to fell a confiderable part of his eftate, in order to pay off the feveral debts fhe had contracted, which, as he had always been remarkably punctual in his payments, and moderate in his own expences, added to the pangs he had already felt on her account, irritated him almoft to a degree of frenzy, and juftly fill'd up the meafure of his indignation againft her ; what elfe, indeed, could be expected ? He faw both fortune, and every hope of happinefs at once deftroyed, and her the cruel caufe thereof ; for high and pompous living, with an inattention to the fund that is neceffary to fupport it, is inevitably the road to ruin ; and the ruin of people's fortunes by extravagance,

gance, I have generally observed, is almost constantly attended with the debasement of their understanding, and the corruption of their manners.

She, who in London had always been distinguished as the genteel, the gay, the sprightly lady Meanwell, in the country became perfectly moped and stupid; which, by degrees, settled into so profound a melancholly as could never afterwards be removed: Sir John, who always knew the value of money, having now too fatally experienced the sad effects of his lady's extravagance, became so sordidly covetous, that he very justly incurr'd the censure of contempt: a fine young lady, their daughter, was, by this ill-judg'd conduct on both sides, depriv'd of all manner of improvement; it is true, indeed, she had a large fortune secur'd to her by the marriage-settlement; but surely, had it been still more considerable, it could no more be esteem'd an equivalent for such a loss as she sustained, than the possession of the finest paintings in the world can be thought a compensation for the loss of sight; for whatever adorations ignorance, or interested craft, may possibly pay to wealth or beauty, merit alone must ever be the object of true respect; and a superiority

periority of this kind will always more effectually command the distinctions due to true greatness, than all the false glare of those titles, or that external pomp and profusion, by which alone we do, indeed, but wretchedly, surpass the vulgar : but, alas ! the means of acquiring this merit, the unhappy Lucinda was, I may venture to say it, cruelly defrauded of by the faults of her parents, not her own ; for the dissensions between Sir John and lady Meanwell rose so high, that the education of this only daughter, whom heaven had entrusted to their care, was thereby totally neglected ; insomuch, that she could scarcely read, at an age when she ought to have been a perfect mistress of every accomplishment that was proper for her sex and rank.

I therefore, once more, intreat my fair readers to reflect, with due attention, on the pernicious effects of play, and of too quick a relish for what they often mistakenly esteem the elegant gaieties of life ; and I likewise beg them to observe, that I confine not my censure merely against the vice of playing deep, because I am to suppose, that, to the generality of women, that circumstance carries with it something even in its first appearance

that is too shocking for temptation ; but it is the present violent propensity to this custom in general that I condemn, which strengthens by indulgence beyond the power of reduction, and leads insensibly into confirm'd habits of unreserve, and loose dissipation, that are sometimes productive of mischiefs still more fatal to the sex, than even the loss of fortune itself: in the character of lady Meanwell, whose story, I again assure them, is authentic, they will see the affection of a wife, the tenderness of a mother, and, in short, every indispensable duty of life, neglected and despis'd, merely because they were over-borne by the torrent of this destructive passion.

But to return to myself; while Sir John Meanwell's family was involved in this unhappy scene of confusion and disorder, Polydore married again, and gave me instantly a most friendly invitation to his house, which I as readily accepted, because that I was now in appeared to me like a frightful desert ; besides, as Polydore continued still to have the care of my fortune, I judged that my residence in his house, now he was married, could have no improper appearance to the world, I therefore quitted
Sir

Sir John, and his lady without the least regret, and never more returned to them.

That I felt no pain in leaving a family, I had lived in almost from my infancy to this time, can hardly be wondered at, if my readers will please to consider, that the improvement of my mind had all this while been so totally disregarded, that I must have been in a manner incapable of any thing so refined as the tender emotions of gratitude for favours received ; if in truth such an education as mine ought to be esteemed a favour, that once so cruelly destroyed the whole power of acknowledging it ; and as to my feeling any compassion for the sufferings and misery of other people, by virtue of this very education, I became absolutely insensible of what it meant : the human mind, when fill'd, as mine at that time certainly was, with nothing else but vanity and folly, may be compared, I think, not unfitly to a garden that is quite over-run with weeds, where the mere neglect of cultivation occasions not only a horrid appearance of deformity, but debases, in a great measure, the natural power of the soil, and prevents by this means the production of an infinite variety of useful plants and flowers.

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Indeed it is very probable, if I had heard that any young lady, about my own age, had appeared at court in a finer dress than I was mistress of, it might have excited in me some very keen sensations of grief and sorrow, but this was the highest affliction I was then capable of: I thought the whole character of a woman consisted in nothing more than that of being a fine lady, and my idea of a fine lady rose certainly no higher, than that she should always be very finely dressed, do the honours of her house with a good grace, and enjoy the full pleasure of admiration, and all the fashionable diversions of this gay town without the least restraint; and to speak the truth, I stood so extremely well in my own estimation at that time, that I very confidently looked upon myself as a perfect model of the finished character, which I had thus fondly conceived.

But I have often since severely condemned myself for this folly; or rather indeed I have sincerely deplored the sad perversion of lady Meanwell's principles, that was the real source thereof; while with incessant thankfulness to heaven, I still acknowledge the transcendent goodness of its providence, that amidst the numberless temptations, with which I was so early
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and so constantly surrounded, I was not however left abandoned, nor suffered to continue long enough therein to be corrupted.

As soon therefore as my mind was a little composed, and fitted to receive even the slightest tincture of useful instruction, I easily perceived the errors of my former course of life ; I looked back with horror on the dreadful precipice from whence I had been delivered, that seemed as if before concealed by the resistless power of some enchantment ; I blessed again the friendly hand that favored my escape, and eagerly pursued the road that leads to virtue's temple, which now lay fairly open to my view ; here I found happiness and peace, and here I still enjoy a plenitude of pleasure, which yet is so incapable of cloying, that it increases always with reflection.

And indeed I have often since had reason to believe, that if I had continued for some time longer in the same train of thoughtless gaiety at lady Meanwell's, I should now have added one to that deplorable group of ever-greens, with which this town already is but too abundantly overstocked : sure, of all creatures that are endowed with animal life, those old butterflies are by much the most ridiculous ; those girls of fifty and sixty, who, at the trifling

expenſe of prudence, determine to be always young ; and waggiſhly belye their wiſdom, in ſpight of the venerable appearance of grey hairs, and all the horrid depredations which the iron tooth of time hath but too faithfully indented on them : things that are unnatural betray always a deformity too notorious to be diſguiſed ; and the affectation of profound wiſdom at fifteen is hardly ſo abſurd as that of redundant gaiety and frolic at fixty.

I cannot help thinking but it would be of ſingular ſervice to theſe ladies, in their own way, to have them conſidered as in the liſt of the tamer kind of monſters ; becauſe as the latter are always much in faſhion, the former might then continue to be viſited, and exhibited with ſtill a better grace ; whereas at preſent, I am ſorry to hear, 'tis thought ſo great a nuſance, that the larger number of females at every aſſembly is generally made up of theſe gay matrons, theſe chearful old fools, who, as Mr. Pope very juſtly obſerves,

Worn out in public, weary every eye,
Nor leave one ſigh behind them when they die.

C H A P. IX.

Some farther animadversions on the behaviour of old women, who not only render themselves extremely ridiculous, but are sometimes precipitated into things that are criminal, by too unseasonably affecting the character of youth, both in their pleasures, dress and manners; the inconsistency of wishing to grow old, yet hating to appear so, perfectly childish; virtue, if properly cultivated in youth, an ample supplement, and compensation for the havoc, which age generally makes on beauty; an ingenious scheme proposed for the employment of such old ladies, as are not engaged in some more useful avocations, in order to prevent the scandal and impropriety of their too frequently exposing themselves; the authoress's story continued; the true character of Polydore.

THough it is universally known that the whole human race, from an irresistible impulse in nature, is extremely desirous of protracting life to the most extensive period, yet so preposterous on this occasion is the humour of woman-kind more especially, that very few of us can bear, with any degree of patience, the shocking apprehension of being thought old.

old: hence that swarm of youthful dowagers and gay grand-mothers that so unmercifully infest the town; and hence that number of experienced spinsters, who having dealt so long in cruelty to no purpose, seem charitably inclined at last to avenge their lovers, by practising on themselves: all these, I say, by arrogating impertinently the character of youth, without its charms, too often injuriously affix on age the censure of contempt.

We seem to forget, or rather indeed to be intirely ignorant, that age has certainly its respective portion of human blessings; which, though perhaps not quite so violent, are yet more lasting, and more productive of true happiness than those of youth; the abuse of youth, 'tis true, does sometimes justly stamp misfortune upon age, and render it thereby a scene of infirmity and joyless gloom, but it is only from the prevailing humour of our aping too unseasonably the levities of the former, that we can ever render the latter thoroughly ridiculous: we are scarcely ever offended at the gravity of an old cat, because we know that it is quite natural, but when we behold the same animal awkwardly attempting to frisk and gambol, like a kitten, we feel indeed some provocation to mirth, but then it is the
sort

fort of mirth that is a mixture of contempt and indignation.

It certainly requires but little penetration to discover the numberless absurdities ~~not~~ to say crimes, into which our sex is unhappily betray'd by this ridiculous inconsistency, this unaccountable affectation of appearing always young, of ardently desiring still to live, and at the same time of hating to grow old; and though the cause of this irrational weakness is not less obvious than its effect, there seems to be however an almost invincible difficulty in the way of its removal; arising chiefly, as I conceive, from the false, yet obstinate shame of appearing what we really are, and from the mistaken prospect of some imagined good by the concealment of some defect; which last expedient too proves generally as fruitless and absurd as that of young children, who flatter themselves that by shutting their own eyes they become absolutely invisible to every body else.

That innate sense of shame which infinite wisdom so strongly implanted in us, was surely intended for a nobler use than that of being perverted by a mistaken self-love to the low purposes of deception; ~~it~~ was originally designed to be the faithful guardian of decency and honour; yet
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not so as to maim virtue by becoming a restriction upon sincerity : we all of us desire, or at least we ought to desire to appear amiable, because nature certainly intended that we should ; but then this end is never to be accomplished at the expence of truth ; if the means we use are disingenuous, we frustrate the kind intentions of nature in our favour, and become justly accessory to the disappointment of our own hopes.

A girl in all the healthful bloom of fifteen, who happens to be blessed with an extraordinary loveliness of features and complexion, may, I will allow, by unveiling a little, acknowledge the bounties of nature without indecency ; she may even, if the season permits, sometimes display the whole beauty of her hair without a cap ; but beyond this age, policy, no less than decency, forbids the practice : that she is most divinely fair (if such she really is) will soon be thoroughly understood, without her taking so much pains to arrest the eyes of every beholder, as if to extort indelicately a full confession of her charms.

If use, and the constant attention with which mankind are apt to survey external objects, can reduce by degrees, as well *the power of beauty*, as the honour of deformity,

formity, to one and the same sad level of indifference (as it often most unquestionably does) what advantage then can the fairest nymph, merely as such, have over the plainest, except in the superior success of that rational expedient, which consists, not so much in prepossessing the imagination of an admirer, from the little he has already seen, as in convincing his judgment, that something still more lovely remains to be disclosed ; that the charms of her person are but a very imperfect abstract of those of her mind, the unfolding whereof by degrees leaves him always the pleasure of expecting still something new, to constitute that true system of happiness, which such a variety has alone the power of supporting; and surely common sense suggests that this is not to be effected by the precipitate exposure of too much at once, which is still further confirmed by the authority of the wise and learned.

Naked in nothing should a woman be,
But veil her very wit with modesty.

If this be the case then even with the lovely and the young, how inexcusably absurd must be the conduct of those gay matrons, those sprightly antiques, who, without the least pretension to beauty, wit or youth, persist in displaying such immoderate portions of factitious skin and
hair,

hair, as if they supposed that the men were now grown either extremely short-fighted, or were only to be captivated by being disgusted.

The fashion that has for some time prevailed of appearing naked in public, was, without all doubt, originally nothing more than a hostile conspiracy of the beauties against us venerable antiques, in order to expose us to all the virulence of ridicule, and at the same time to have our feeble constitutions inhumanly attacked by the inclemency of the weather ; but if we understood our true interest, we have in our power an effectual method to countermince all such flimsy projects, by convincing these malicious beauties, often to their cost, that time robs us of no one external charm, without leaving us in possession, if it be not our own fault, of many others that are much more material ; yet these we seem totally to disregard, and to feel in age an unnatural pleasure in becoming proselytes to every folly and impertinence that fashion seems to have appropriated to youth alone.

A woman may be exquisitely handsome in the bloom of youth, and from her great inexperience may possibly be indulg'd for a while in the commission of certain foibles that are almost inseperable from the display

display of beauty, which however that very beauty does in some measure apologise for; but she may nevertheless be shockingly the reverse of this at fifty-five, and yet unfortunately retain the use of some faculties in full perfection; particularly, such strength of memory and imagination, as may still fondly urge her to expect a continuance of that tribute which with justice can alone be paid to beauty in its meridian; for this purpose she cruelly fatigues both herself and her horses almost to death and lavishly exhibits her mellow charms in every public and private assembly, where she can gain admittance, in order to convince the world of what they too well knew before, that she, who had been once a celebrated beauty, continues still to be a fool.

I cannot help thinking that an inordinate love of pleasure must be one of the chief motives to this ridiculous practice of old womens affecting to appear so much younger than they really are; it gives them, as they imagine, a very extensive latitude for playing the fool according to fashion, and that, much longer than they could otherwise with any decency attempt to do: besides the dreadful apprehension of being totally neglected, and in
a man

a manner rudely thrust out of the world, which they have long accustomed themselves to look upon as the certain consequence of growing old, deters them wholly from attempting such a propriety of conduct as would be much more suitable to their time of life : but surely if the short season of our youth has been employed even in the rudiments of virtue, and the improvement of our minds, so far from being justly either the cause of terror or shame, old age will then be our glory and our happiness ; the longer we live, the more valuable we shall become, and still more truly esteemed by all the wise and good ; and as to the opinion of others, I think, with doctor Young,

Their praise defames, as if a fool should mean
By spitting on your face to make it clean ;

and consequently their keenest censure must be high applause ; for a life well spent affords an exquisite pleasure in the reflection on what is past, takes away all terrible apprehensions of futurity, and what is still more, gives us a most agreeable temper of mind to enjoy the present.

I honestly acknowlege that, from certain prejudices which I had for some time given way to, it was with no small difficulty I prevailed upon myself to confess
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my own age; but now that I have got this critical point happily over, I have resolution enough to request of all my real friends, that they will be so obliging as to acquaint me instantly, if they discover any-thing in my conduct that may be inconsistent with the liberty I here take in censuring that of other people, being thoroughly sensible that even the best advice is but too apt to lose all its weight when not uniformly supported by example; and I assure my fair readers, with great humility, that I shall always be ready to kiss the rod, whenever impartiality can convict me of a crime so base as that of endeavouring to make the cause of virtue and beauty only a pretence for the gratification of my own spleen, envy, and ill-nature.

I earnestly wish to see beauty as universally the object of true esteem, as it is now seldom more than barely that of transitory passion; and such indeed may all its possessors very easily render it by the friendly assistance of virtue, with this peculiar encouragement, that happiness is always made the certain reward of their success; and although I have at present scarce any vanity left that can be piqu'd by the disappointment, I have nevertheless pleasure in supposing, that even my feeble
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animadversions on the several improprieties in female conduct might possibly produce a desirable effect on some fair matrons at least, if they did not precipitately conclude that it was now too late to change their manner of life; from this absurd apprehension, that as the world has been already so long in possession of the laugh, any attempt to remove, might but increase it still the more; but then they should consider that such an inference is not less an affront to their understanding, than it is to their virtue; an understanding well improved shews beauty always to the most advantage, yet this can never be, where virtue has not the principal share in that improvement; and I believe it is pretty apparent that the success of beauty without this, in regard to either of the important articles of happiness or conquest, is generally too inconsiderable to deserve, as yet, the credit of being esteemed an indisputable precedent.

I would recommend to my fair country-women, and particularly to the class of youthful matrons, and ever-greens, an ingenious scheme of employment, which I once knew very successfully practised by an old batchelour, who was formerly a man of pleasure, and whose mind had been as little improved in his youth, as
that

that of most of our modern fine ladies; as he grew old, he found himself by degrees strangely neglected, except by the sordid tribe, whose servile assiduities are always to be purchased by views of self-interest, whom however he had cunning enough, for some time, equally to encourage and disappoint; but he grew tired even of this, and felt himself at last incapable of relishing any of the pleasures of his youth; he was master of no one virtue or useful accomplishment that might help to elude, or soften the approaching infirmities of old age, nor from books could he ever derive the least amusement; yet he had still spirit enough not to play the fool longer, merely because it was the fashion for people at his time of life commonly to do so, especially when no other pleasure accru'd to him from thence, and he had just sense enough to know, that in order to avoid contempt, he must become invisible; he accordingly banished himself into a solitary part of the country, where an old acquaintance (for friends he could have none) accidentally found him one day very busily employed in feeding a number of little chickens; and asking him the reason why he chose to spend the remainder of his days in that despicable manner, was pertinently answered, that the chickens

kens knew not that he was now grown old; that however inglorious such an occupation may appear, it was at least innocent, and as he acknowledged himself to be at present utterly unfit for any-thing of greater importance, he still thought this preferable to a perseverance in the ways of vice and folly.

I doubt not but my fair readers will make the proper application here; and my regard for them is so great, that I the more strenuously recommend seasonable retirement, even as an artifice, if they chuse not to embrace it as a means to virtue; besides, by lessening in this manner the exorbitant price of poultry, they may possibly become of some use to the public, and in their old age atone thereby in some measure for a life, whose youth at best had perhaps been only spent in idleness and vanity.

But after so long a digression, I think, 'tis now high time that I should return to my own story: my readers will please to remember that Polydore was by Belinda's will appointed my guardian; the care of my fortune was, it may be easily imagin'd, no disagreeable trust to him, and as to that of my education, it is very plain, he gave himself no sort of trouble about it, or he would not have suffered me to con-
tinue

tinue so long with lady Meanwell, whose true character he perfectly well understood : the stronger the propensity to extravagance, which I was likely to contract from her ladyship's example, the less likely, he supposed, could be the prospect of my looking into my own affairs, provided that he supplied me, as indeed he constantly did, with ample means for the gratification of that extravagance ; and the apprehension of my falling into the hands of people who might possibly suggest to me such a prudent inspection of my fortune, did most probably accelerate that obliging invitation which he gave me to his house, in order still more effectually to prevent it ; but this I never once imagined at the time, for his whole behaviour seemed not only disinterested, but spoke all the tenderness of a most affectionate parent ; whenever I made an application to him for money, he always gave me double, if not treble the sum I asked, and seemed to enjoy a particular satisfaction in letting me know that he thought it highly proper, I should, on all occasions, make an appearance suitable to the fortune I was mistress of.

This behaviour could not fail to gain upon a young mind, regardless, as mine then was, of every thing but the indulgence of my vanity ; it soon conciliated

my duty and affection for him in so powerful a degree that, of all the human species I looked upon him as the best, and thought myself peculiarly happy in having such a friend; but a little time convinced me that I was fatally deceived; he was in short a most complicated character; in his person he still looked well, but had been very handsome, yet never seemed to have the least vanity on that account; in his temper he was good-natured, compassionate, chearful, and extremely well-bred, yet without the least tincture of pride: I have been told by those who were judges, that he had naturally an exceeding good understanding, which was still improved by every advantage a liberal education could bestow; but of this, I presume, he scarcely ever made any use, as he suffered both fools and knaves to rob him of his time and money: he had, as if for their accommodation chiefly, a very fine house in town, fitted up, and furnished in the most elegant taste, and in a pleasant part of the country, within a short day's journey of London, he had likewise a charming villa, with a park and large gardens laid out in the most beautiful manner; he kept a very splendid equipage, and seemed to derive no small pleasure from the incumbrance of a prodigious number of servants and hories.

- Two gentlemen, of family and fortune, who were, both of them, nearly related to Tradewell, began to conceive some suspicions, and to grow much dissatisfied at Polydore's conduct in regard to me; as to the just foundation of these suspicions, I was at that time intirely ignorant, but they openly avowed their intentions to rescue, if possible, the young Cornelia from impending ruin; and, to that purpose, designed making an application to the court of chancery, that I might be taken out of the hands of Polydore, that my fortune might be deposited in the court, and the issues and profits thereof fairly accounted for since the death of my mother; but as a relation of the consequences which ensued on that occasion might run this chapter into too great a length, I shall therefore defer it till the next.

C H A P. X.

Polydore's complicated character continued, and partly explained; with a remark upon the generality of guardians; the extraordinary character of Sipiana represented in the most candid manner, and also that of her father. Portia introduc'd, but not continu'd.

BEFORE the friendly design of my two relations, as mentioned in the last chapter, could be carried into execution,

Polydore was informed of the affair, and by a proper, or rather indeed, an artful management, he very seasonably defeated the whole purpose thereof, and wrought so effectually on my tender imagination, as to make me apprehend that a removal of my person and affairs from his house and protection, would now be the greatest misfortune that could possibly befall me : the well-known character of the two gentlemen above-mentioned did but too successfully assist the operation of his scheme, for they were both reputed to be profess'd libertines ; the dangerous consequence whereof, in regard to me, he represented in so pathetic a manner as soon filled me with the utmost terror, and fully convinced me, as I then imagined, of the sincerity of his friendship towards me.

To confirm the matter still stronger, one of these gentlemen happened to be in the army, a circumstance which at that time greatly added to my fears ; for, from my earliest youth, I had conceived a most unaccountable dread of the people of that profession, which, instead of being removed, strengthened by degrees, as I grew up, into an almost insuperable antipathy ; nor can I say, even at present, (though I hope and believe there may be many worthy men among them) that this prejudice,



prejudice, if such it is, in regard to the generality of them, is thoroughly eradicated as yet.

But be that as it will, Polydore conducted the whole affair with so much address, that I then thought myself extremely happy in his permission to chuse him as my guardian, being just now arrived at an age that rendered such an act of choice in me quite legal; which so extremely disoblged my two worthy relations, that they would never afterwards be reconciled to me, nor make any allowance for the great inexperience of my youth, which Polydore's artifice had thus easily circumvented; notwithstanding that I made every concession in my power, to atone for an indiscretion, which I was not conscious of, as such, at the time of committing it.

However, in less than three years, my eyes were fully opened, and I beheld the whole merit of these gentlemens' kind endeavours to serve me in its true light; I was soon convinced that their intentions were strictly honourable and disinterested; but alas! the critical opportunity was now fatally lost, and though, in consequence of what they then called my contumacy, they peremptorily refused to be concerned farther in my affairs, I ne-

verthelſs think myſelf obliged, as a debt juſtly due to their benevolence, to make ſome acknowledgement here, even for the kindneſs of attempting ſo much as they did to ſerve me.

But before I proceed to the immediate cauſe of thoſe miſfortunes which Polydore brought upon me, it may not perhaps be thought impertinent on this occaſion to give my fair readers, by way of caution, as well as detail, a few anecdotes concerning him, which may help to repreſent ſo mixed a character in the propereſt light; and, at the ſame time, to warn them, in ſome meaſure, by the hapleſs inexperience and indiſcretion of my example, againſt the too common artifices of guardians; againſt their reſpoſing too implicit a confidence in ſuch of them as are capable of being ſeduced either by the powers of avarice or extravagance, baſely to defraud their wards, under the moſt plausible appearances of friendſhip and affection; and to ſacrifice every other conſideration, how ſacred ſoever it may be, to the unjuſt gratification of their own intereſted views : I affirm not, however, that all guardians are abſolutely of this complexion, but I affirm poſitively, that in the bulk of mankind there are very few who are not ſtrongly tinctured with one
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or other of these passions ; and, whenever a young lady of considerable fortune happens to fall into the talons of such a harpy, 'tis more than a thousand to one that she escapes not uninjured ; such, at least, was the deplorable case with me, and that from a man whose integrity had been loudly celebrated ; the iniquity of whose intentions towards me, I no more suspected than my own ; 'tis therefore that I speak with greater freedom ; experience gives still an additional weight to that authority and confidence with which truth should always be delivered, and if my assertions here shall on that account happen to give offence, as such offence can fall but on the guilty, I shall ever glory in any wound of that kind that I can give, and think it much too small a part of the punishment which so heinous a crime deserves.

To come then to Polydore, my upright guardian and affectionate father-in-law ; one of his modes of artifice, in regard to me, was to talk to me frequently about Belinda ; and seem to take a particular pleasure in running over all her several charms ; in pointing out, as if for my imitation, every article of real merit which she had been possessed of ; and, as if the most endearing parental tenderness for me

had prompted him to it, he would likewise often represent with the utmost candour all her failings and imperfections, that I might strictly endeavour to avoid them; and particularly warn'd me against vanity, that fatal rock on which her health and life had untimely suffer'd shipwreck; now if this was artifice (and such the sequel of his conduct indisputably proved it to be) it had at least so genuine an appearance of sincerity and affection, and was, at the same time, so strongly supported by reason, that it must have deceived a wiser woman than any I have ever yet had the happiness of knowing.

But his favourite theme on these occasions was the much admired Portia, the sister of Tradewell, who was at this time a widow, and had resided for some years among her relations in France, though she had been married to an English gentleman, and lived here during his life; Polydore, I say, would often represent Portia to me, as the most accomplished of her sex, as the most perfect pattern of true beauty he had ever known;

Portia, the glory of the human race,

Portia, more lovely by her mind than face:

he had been acquainted with her almost from the infancy of both of them, and had not Portia's penetration early discovered some-

something in his principles, how speciously soever varnished over, that was incompatible with that rectitude which was the foundation of all her actions, and likewise inconsistent with her sentiments in regard to conjugal happiness, 'tis not at all improbable but they would have been man and wife, tho' it will appear, when I come to relate the particulars of her story, that she was full as much deceived in the choice she made: Polydore however would often dwell with no less pleasure than confidence upon all her several virtues, in the different stations of life thro' which she had passed; he admired her filial piety, her conjugal affection, and her maternal tenderness, all which he usually celebrated with the highest applause; and most fervently recommended to me, in case I should ever be so happy as to see her, that I would carefully endeavour to transplant, if possible, some of her great and many virtues into my own breast, and would then always conclude with a deep sigh, and the following words,

No more such generous sentiments we trace,
In the gay moderns of the female race.

Indeed it must be allowed that his present lady was of a very different cast of mind, for with regard to character she

was scarcely to be defined ; so true is that observation of my favourite poet,

Most women have no characters at all :

perhaps there never was a weaker head joined to a better heart ; she had a most unabated passion for religion, and would, on no account, omit any of its external ceremonies ; as she was naturally of a stoical disposition, I am inclined to believe, she thought the whole duty of a woman consisted merely in a certain degree of rigid apathy, and in being constantly immur'd in her closet, except when she happened to be summoned forth from thence by the tolling of the bell, to participate in the public devotions of the church ; and yet, though she was daily conversant with St. Paul, I very much doubt whether she was able to give a better reason for her faith, than its being that of her ancestors ; but compassion obliges me to say no more : let the purity of her intentions atone, as I make no doubt but it has, for all her failings, for vices she had none.

This lady, whom I shall call Sipiana, succeeded my mother as the legal partner for life of the gay the magnificent Polydore ; she was the daughter of an antient vegetable in one of the neighbouring counties, whose character, I think, I ought to

to give my readers a small sketch of, as it may, in some measure, help to account for that of his daughter, and at the same time more fully illustrate the conduct of Polydore; Sipiana's father then, was a plain hospitable country-gentleman, with a good estate, an honest heart, and an empty head; he had constantly, from the time of his being of age, represented his borough in parliament, but was never known, in the course of a very long term of years, to have attempted making one speech in the house; which yet, if the intrinsic merit of many florid speeches that were made there during that period, could now be impartially estimated, would certainly appear as a very high point of wisdom; but he was nevertheless thought a useful man on some occasions, and was therefore easily persuaded to believe that he was no fool: he resembled Sir Roger de Coverly in so many instances, that I have often been induced to think, he must have sat for the amiable picture which Mr. Addison has left us of that worthy old knight.

His daughter Sipiana, when she intermarried with Polydore, was the widow of a gentleman of considerable fortune, by whom she had one daughter, whose name was Aspatia, and whose education, upon

her mother's second marriage, was committed to the care of her father's family, which proved a most fortunate incident for this young lady ; of whom, however I must defer saying any-thing more for the present, and return to Sipiana, whose father gave her, as she was a favourite daughter, a large fortune even on her second marriage; but indeed he might well afford to do so, for he gave her nothing else but fortune ; wisely judging, I suppose, that as money was then scarce, a large sum would be much more acceptable to the generality of husbands, than if he had bestowed any part of it upon her education ; at least this is the only probable means by which we can account for the strange neglect thereof that was so notoriously apparent throughout her whole life: but however that was, Sipiana's great possessions, I am very certain, were the sole inducement to Polydore to marry her, for never were two people more diametrically opposite to each other in temper, manner, principle, and understanding, than these ; though this did not however appear to be the case to all their acquaintance, for the duties of her closet engrossed so much of her time, that she had scarce any left to throw away upon her husband and his friends, and consequently many of her particular

particular failings and oddities were, on that account, the less exposed ; but had his affection for her person been greater, his politeness, in not reminding her that he had an undoubted right to a share in her society, even with heaven itself, would certainly have been less; and yet whether that would have enhanced her happiness is a matter of much doubt.

But Polydore, though he actually succeeded in the enjoyment of his wishes by this marriage, yet began by degrees, as he wanted not understanding, to perceive the weakness and futility of the plan he had proceeded on, and also its insufficiency to constitute that system of rational happiness, which he had thereby vainly imagined himself secure of: he had passed his time with Belinda in a very different manner, whose person temper, and wit, were all extremely agreeable and entertaining; it was therefore that he now found himself the more cruelly disappointed: and tho' he wanted not penetration to have in some measure foreseen this consequence, yet I am inclined to believe, the truth was, that delicacy and deliberation upon the means of such a system of rational happiness here might have proved dangerous, for the present situation of his affairs called loudly for an
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immediate supply of fortune, and as marriage seemed to him to be the most feasible scheme for facilitating that end, prudence according to that maxim consequently suggested that neither the complexion, nor disposition of the lady were to be carried into the account; so industriously ingenious are mankind sometimes to deceive themselves in the most important circumstance of life, the pursuit of true happiness: and indeed Polydore was here most wretchedly deceived, for the impossibility of having now an agreeable companion at home, drove him in a manner away from his own house, and led him by degrees into confirmed habits of intemperance and extravagance, though he was far from being an epicure, and always detested the character of a sot.

C H A P. XI.

Characters of Sipiana and Polydore more particularly illustrated; the disagreeable life the authorefs led in this family; her manner of employing her time there, and her prudence in submitting to such a life, when it was palpably in violence to her inclination; comparison of the extremes through which ſhe paſſed in going from lady Meanwell to reſide with Sipiana; ſtrange reverse of her fortune upon the death of Polydore; the unexpected ſituation in which his affairs were found, and the effect this had upon the authorefs, with her reflections on that occaſion, and particularly on the infamous practice of running in debt beyond the power of payment.

IN the extraordinary family then, mentioned in my laſt, was I doomed to ſpend a few years more of my life; the maſter and miſtreſs whereof, 'tis true, were ſolemnly united, according to the letter of the marriage-law, but were nevertheless very far from being ſo, according to the intention and true ſpirit of that inſtitution; for, on the part of Polydore, neither ſentiment, nor inclination, nor any other deſireable circumſtance whatſoever,

never, that might lead to an expectation of conjugal felicity (if I except the convenience of Sipiana's fortune) had the ~~cast share~~ in the choice he here made; nor indeed on hers, if I barely except that of living in the honourable estimation which is generally apt to be conceived of the marriage-state; for the characteristic by which she was chiefly to be distinguished in all the common occurrences of life, was that of insipidity and extreme indifference; tho' in the business of religion, as I hinted before, she seemed to possess all the active spirit of enthusiasm.

My time, in such a situation as this, must necessarily hang very heavily on my hands; to Sipiana, as to the wife of my guardian, who should have been likewise my director, and example in many material points, I certainly owed, and paid her a very high degree of deference and respect; insomuch that, contrary to the impulse of inclination, I restrained, not only the natural vivacity of my disposition, but also that restless propensity to a life of pleasure which I had contracted at lady Meanwell's, and sedulously endeavoured to accommodate myself, as much as possible to all the particularities of her humour; but the reluctance I almost constantly felt in performing a task so very
difficult

difficult and disagreeable, rendered me extremely miserable, yet in a manner wholly without an option to relieve myself, except I resolved to come to an open rupture with Polydore, which would have been effected at this time with a very ill grace, as I had so lately chosen him for my guardian.

My chief resource therefore, under the great inconvenience of my present condition, after the most mature deliberation I was capable of, was in a total acquiescence and submission to the will of those, to whom decency, as well as the law, had now given some power over me; I was enabled to bear this inconvenience with the greater alacrity by the consolation I received from my own hopes, that, in case no fortunate event should happen to do it sooner, my being at full age would indisputably deliver me from thence; and in order to fill up many of those vacuities that were extremely irksome to me, I devoted as much of my time as I possibly could to reading; which might indeed have proved not less an advantage than it was an amusement to me, if some friendly hand had happily pointed out what might have contributed most to my improvement; but this, alas! was so essentially wanting, that I could do little more than

than merely murder time ; for I hastily ran over whole volumes, without being able to form the least judgment of what I had read, and almost without adding one new idea or sentiment to the little stock I was before possessed of ; but I nevertheless pursued this journey still, as it afforded me some entertainment, or, at least, some small intervals of relaxation, from dwelling too intensely on what I conceived to be the wretchedness of my present lot, compared with the felicity I had formerly tasted at lady Meanwell's.

In this random course I have many times fancied myself in the situation of some bewildered traveller in an unknown region ; where, though the climate and prospects all around me were extremely pleasant and agreeable, I could not however proceed on my way with any certainty or satisfaction to myself, but was often obliged to suffer the greatest inconveniences from my not being able to comprehend either the language, or the kind and hospitable intentions of the several inhabitants towards me ; I had Polydore's library so intirely to myself, that it seemed to be solely appropriated to my use, for he now seldom or never came into it ; it was esteemed to be a very fine one, and filled with the best authors in
every

every known language; indeed I afterwards experienced that it was a very valuable one; but for want of the friendly assistance before mentioned, I have often thought since, that I might have been very justly compared, in my reading at that time, to the cock on the dunghil, who, as the fable informs us, preferred a barley-corn to a rich jewel; for I often foolishly preferred some trifling romance to the solid improvement that was to have been derived from the reading of morality and history: 'tis true indeed, I might reasonably have expected such assistance in this way from my guardian as I required, especially as I was sensible that he wanted neither the will, nor the power, to communicate knowlege, but his domestic affairs since his last marriage had been conducted in such a manner as rendered him not less a stranger to his own home, than it did me to that salutary instruction I might otherwise have received from him.

I therefore presume not at present to claim the least degree of merit from my application to study, or indeed from my particular attachment to a retired life at that time; if there was any virtue in it, it was certainly the virtue of necessity not choice; for my inclination very strongly solicited me to pass my time in a more agree-

agreeable way ; and I have often since with all the gratitude justly due to my good genius on that account, congratulated myself for submitting at any rate to those restraints, which prudence, in such a precarious situation as mine then was, must always dictate ; though it must be confessed, they are but seldom attended to by the giddy and the young.

So sudden a transition from one extreme to another, as I at that time experienced, was, I believe what few young people of my reputed fortune, though advanced perhaps to a greater maturity of age and understanding than myself, could however have borne with a becoming moderation : I was, by lady Meanwell, as I have already shewn, very early initiated into many of the fashionable vanities and follies of gay life, under the specious prepossession of its being the properest system of education for a young lady of fortune ; and I was just snatched time enough from the pernicious errors of this admired system, only to be plunged into those of a direct contrary extreme ; I consequently required much more fortitude, and a greater strength of judgment, to conduct myself in such critical circumstances than I was mistress of ; but providence was graciously pleased to support me through
this

this scene, and likewise through tryals of a much more severe and difficult kind.

For the period was now drawing near, which was to shew me things in a light wherein I had never yet beheld them : Polydore, in the meridian of life, was seized with a violent fever, which, in a few days, carried him to his silent tomb ; what I felt on this occasion is not to be described, for my affection for him was that of a child to the best parent ; I had, at least, never known any other, and his behaviour to me, as far as I was then capable of judging, very fully justified all my affliction for his death.

But alas ! my woes were but just begun ; I had more to suffer than I was aware of, or could have suspected : the solemnity of his funeral was scarcely over, when crowds of importunate creditors appeared, with demands to a very considerable amount, which Sipiana was an intire stranger to ; and as there seemed to be no provision made for the payment thereof in his will, they instantly proceeded to seize, without the least mercy, upon his plate and furniture, both in town and country, and also on his equipages, moveables, and all his valuable collections of pictures, statues, and medals ; in short, nothing was to be seen in our house for
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some time but a scene of wild confusion, and the utmost disorder ; yet all this was not able to ruffle, or discompose in the smallest degree, the stoical temper of Sippiana ; her jointure, she well knew, was too firmly secured to be subjected to any hazard on this occasion, and the state of widowhood, how deplorable soever it may be thought, she was, from past experience, fully prepared to encounter ; besides, she had moreover the high consolation of knowing, that the largeness of her income would always be a sufficient temptation to knaves and fools at least, to give her an opportunity of changing that state whenever she pleased.

But the case with me was widely different : I was at once tumbled down from the envied summit of felicity almost to the lowest abyss of misery ; from the flattering circumstance of scarcely ever stirring abroad but in a chariot, or chair, that was kept wholly for my use, and a number of idle attendants about me, I had very soon the mortification to find myself obliged to submit to the mere convenience of a hired vehicle, the bare necessities of life, and just decent apparel ; nor was I certain how long even this pittance would last : I was not, I confess, at all prepared for such a vicissitude, my mind was totally

ly void of all support from itself, till adversity, in humbling my spirit, by degrees restored me to the proper use of my reason, and fully convinced me, that nothing but experience, that instructive mistress of fools, can effectually impress both on the heart and understanding that divine aphorism of the preacher, that all our desires are vanity.

This was however a work of some time as well as difficulty ; for, by the conduct of most young people, it would seem as if the season of youth had been allotted for no other purpose than the indulgence of heedless gaiety ; the nimble spirits, it is true, mount usually then above the common accidents of life, while, in spite of the most untoward obstacles, we still press forward, with unabated ardour, to obtain the enjoyment of our wishes : I never reflect upon this period of my life, without the greatest thankfulness to heaven, for making the imprudent conduct of Polydore, his unexpected death, and the seemingly unhappy consequences of both these events to me, the beneficent means of my becoming wiser, and learning from thence the true use of my understanding.

I had indeed been an eye-witness, as I before mentioned, to some scenes of extravagance in lady Meanwell, which,
young

young as I was, even the small portion of judgment I at that time possessed, obliged me, in some measure, to condemn; till I had been instructed by her ladyship's asseverations to believe that the baronet was immensely rich, and that avarice alone had suggested the rigour of those measures he had so cruelly imposed on her, which, I confess, very suddenly suppressed every tender emotion of pity in his favour that I was capable of: I saw they were extremely unhappy, but I was too young, and much too volatile, to enter deeply into the real merits of the case, or suffer them to make any impression on me, to the prejudice or interruption of what I then judged to be my supreme happiness; although I have since been of opinion that those incidents, if they had been properly reflected on at the time, might have redounded much to the advantage of my judgment.

But the melancholly scene of confusion and mortality that now appeared before me, joined to a dreadful apprehension, which was but too justly grounded, of the loss of almost all my fortune, did, it may be easily imagined, affect me very deeply; yet, I thank heaven, not so deeply as to impair my health, or totally depress my spirits, which youth and a good con-

tion possibly prevented : if how-
 produced this good effect, that I be-
 om hence, for the first time in my
 life, to learn to think ; for hitherto
 most uninterrupted series of gaiety
 leisure, un-embittered by any event
 to me appear'd to be a sufficient cause
 of action, had in a manner quite turn'd
 head, and forced me to hold the fa-
 culty of thinking, that is, of reflecting
 propriety upon my own conduct,
 that of other people, as a meanness
 beneath the character of a woman
 and for me to condescend to.

Since I have since had many oppor-
 tunities to remark, that merely through
 want of this faculty, one of the most
 important parts in the conduct of human
 life ; that of knowing how to become
 great and grandeur as we ought to do ;
 I am firmly persuaded, from long
 observation, that they who can fall with
 dignity, when the necessity of their affairs
 require it, bid much the fairest for bear-
 ing the full blaze of prosperity and eleva-
 tion with steadiness, decency and virtue :
 the circle of my connections with the
 world, which have not been very confin-
 ed, have had the happiness of knowing
 few people, who have had moderation
 and delicacy enough not to assume an
 L. I. G air

air of superiority over their equals, from what they judged to be the important, though in fact no more than the mere fortuitous circumstance of possessing somewhat a larger portion of riches ; as if it had been provided according to the reason and nature of things, that the superiority of one man's fortune, how basely soever acquired, should always, upon comparison, be considered as the certain, and just destruction of another's merit ; and that it should necessarily subject him, who derived not from thence, either by dependence or expectation, the least advantage whatsoever, to all the contempt and haughty superciliousness of wealth, as well as to every other casual inconvenience resulting from such a supposed inferiority : I have had indeed the happiness of knowing but few, whose general behaviour was founded in the true spirit of philanthropy ; few that from a just way of thinking had learned the happy art of laying aside the fantastical distinctions of birth and fortune, especially where the exertion of them could possibly serve no purpose more material than the gratification of a little short-lived vanity ; few in short, that could receive and entertain their friends with that decent complaisance which is always expected from

from a visiter, or do offices of beneficence with the modest grace of one that receives them.

But to return to the subject that gave rise to these reflections, I mean the sad reduction of my circumstances, which had been occasioned by the imprudent and iniquitous management of my guardian; I was taught to believe from my earliest infancy that I was possessed of a considerable fortune, to the amount of at least fifty thousand pounds; the management whereof, together with the care of me, by my mother's will devolved instantly upon Polydore at her decease; and his affectionate behaviour to me, as I have already mentioned, when I came to be capable of considering about my own affairs, left me so little to fear, in regard to his fidelity in the discharge of this trust, that about three years before his death, I hesitated not to chuse him for my guardian, preferably to all others; by which means, 'tis true, I in a manner voluntarily put it out of my power to call him to an account, at least 'till such time as I should arrive at full age, which however his unexpected death effectually prevented; so that when his affairs came to be examined into, it appeared that there was scarce a tenth part of my fortune left, which he

had not already spent, and hardly affets sufficient to pay a tenth part of the other debts he had contracted.

As my fortune consisted chiefly of money in the funds, which stood in his name, he sold and transferred the stock at his pleasure, without my privity, or the least check or controul from any of my relations, most of whom, I believe, suspected his integrity as little as myself; those two gentlemen indeed, whom I before mentioned, it is plain, knew him better than we did; and on that account it was, that they purposed making a friendly effort to relieve me; but resentment soon succeeded this kind intention, and they instantly deserted me, when they found that I had chosen him for my guardian, notwithstanding that my reasons for such choice appeared to me, at that time, to be abundantly forcible and just.

In short, I was now become almost destitute of every other friend but innocence and health; and in a very little time experienced, that even the smallest appearance of misfortune is able to dissolve the strongest of those common friendships of the world, that are generally founded in nothing else but sordid interest, caprice, or vanity; I therefore endeavoured, as nearly as I possibly could, to reduce into
prac-

practice that excellent lesson which Mr. Pope has given us in the following lines ;

Submit in this, or any other sphere,
 Certain to be as blest as thou canst bear,
 Safe in the hand of one disposing power,
 Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.

I practised, indeed, this instructive lesson at that time, though not so much from conviction of its excellence, as from downright necessity ; for I found that the expectation of assistance, or any real consolation, from those who call'd themselves my friends, was utterly vain : the enormous list of Polydore's debts, which I observed to be as yet unsatisfied, astonished me beyond expression ; insomuch that all the veneration and filial affection I had hitherto entertained for him, was instantly converted into a mixture of indignation and horror ; I had always, 'till this instant, believed him to be a man of the strictest integrity and honour, and that upon the immutable principles of justice and moral rectitude ; I thought that the vile complication of knavery and folly, which I have since observed to consist in assuming credit beyond our abilities to answer, or, in other words, in running in debt without the means of payment, could have no share in the character of a person of his excellent understanding, and many

exemplary virtues ; but though I felt indeed the woful misfortune of being grossly deceived in this my good opinion of him, yet this very misfortune, great as it certainly was, was however considerably alleviated, as I had the unspeakable consolation of knowing at the same time that I was myself wholly free from the real infamy of conscious evil : I believed his foible to have consisted chiefly in such a taste for the appearance of elegance and magnificence, as I knew his fortune could well support without any exceedings ; but of a crime so iniquitous, and at the same time so vile and mean, as that of running into debt beyond his fortune, being so much more infamous than the basest arts of a pickpocket or common sharper, I confess I never once suspected him.

How people, who by their birth and education would seem to claim an indisputable right to the post of honour, can yet reconcile to themselves the distresses and miseries which such scenes of iniquity too often bring upon disappointed creditors, let them evince ? If the sacred obligations of that religion which they profess are not of sufficient weight to deter men from the baseness of such a conduct, methinks at least their boasted, their darling idol honour ought ; for there are those,
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I am told, who can very heroically scoff at all the dictates of religion, yet modestly display, or at least pretend to display, the keenest sensibility of of honor ; men, who with all the seeming composure of true fortitude, are ready to risque not only the pains and perils of death, but also those of eternity itself, in order to convince the world that honour consists now, not so much in a certain justness of principle, and propriety of action, as in brutally daring to avow, and sanctify those very violations of it, which they themselves have committed : the lye given to one of these heroes, though it be often no more in fact than truth affirmed with some degree of vehemence, is however it seems to be expiated by nothing less than death, or bloodshed at least ; while he that exacts this sanguinary satisfaction is perhaps himself the most infamous of all liars, and has put both his liberty and his honour into the power of what he calls a set of paultry creditors, to proclaim this to the world ; and to guard the rest of mankind from the injuries of so base a deceiver, by his having thus wantonly run into their debt beyond his ability to pay.

And this, I am sorry to say, had long been the secret practice of my righteous

guardian Polydore ; but what renders it still more extraordinary is, that he was so far from being one of those fashionable scoffers at religion, that he regularly, and constantly attended on the service of the church, and seemed from conviction to enter into the reasonableness and importance of all its duties ; so that charity would almost incline me to suppose that his deviations from the rectitude, which that religion inculcates, proceeded rather from a habit of inconsiderateness, than from any settled, or conscious malignity of heart.

And indeed the unaccountable infatuation of that vice, into which, by the flexibility of his own temper, he was too unguardedly betrayed, abundantly confirms this opinion ; 'twas the unhappy vice of gaming that I mean ; and this, in truth it was, that fatally brought on all those evils which I have mentioned above, both upon himself and me, as likewise on many others.

He was a gentleman of the west of England, of an easy fortune, but bred to no business ; which for a man of his active and lively imagination was indeed a most unspeakable misfortune : he had, after the death of Belinda, merely at first by way of amusement only, frequented those

those places, where the best company, under a pretence of excluding inferiors, generally assembled, in order to ruin each other in a well-bred manner; so that what was, at first, as I observed, merely amusement, became by degrees so intirely a business, that in this pernicious diversion, if any thing so destructive can with propriety be called diversion, he at last consum'd whole nights, wherein he at one and the same time impair'd his health, and totally ruined his fortune; in short, it was the indulgence of this one vice that rendered him the complete villain I have described him; for this alone excepted, no man was better able to acquit himself with grace and true dignity in the discharge of all the several offices of life than himself: and most undoubtedly he must have been possessed of some great talents, as the ingenious Mr. Addison, to my knowlege, had in a particular manner honoured him with his friendship.

How amazingly strong then must this infatuation appear, that could thus force him to bury every useful quality; but whenever this subject occurs to my remembrance, I cannot help considering it as an important lesson of humility to all those who are too confident of the superiority of their own great learning and

wisdom ; for Polydore, with all his superior intellectual endowments, most confessedly acted like a mere machine, whose several movements tend to a certain point, as did all his to the indulgence of this one favorite passion ; the people with whom he spent all his time, though much inferior to him in point of understanding, had however penetration enough to discover his latent foible ; they easily touched the well-known spring, and wound him at their pleasure.

But he fell into the common error that most people do, when they commit imprudent actions ; for instead of growing wiser by experience, and becoming sensible of the folly of the past conduct, and the criminal abuse of his faculties, he only sought out such a resource as might give him an opportunity of indulging still more amply his darling, his destructive passion for play ; in such a crisis therefore nothing seemed so eligible to him as a rich wife ; for to men in his circumstances such an one is always held to be as infallible a restorative, as a course of asses milk, good air, and a more generous regimen is to a person in an impoverished state of blood and juices : Sipiana then was, or at least seemed to be fully possessed of all that he desired in a wife ;
but

but I think, I have already made it plainly appear, that in her he very deservedly met with his punishment in his crime ; I shall therefore take my leave of him, and conclude this chapter with my sincerest wishes that all my readers may make the same use of his faults that I have done, which indeed was my principal inducement to give his character.

C H A P. XII.

Sipiana's humane behaviour to the authoress whom she invites to continue with her ; the authoress, instructed by her own misfortunes, endeavours carefully from this period to form her whole conduct upon the plan of prudence, oeconomy, and virtue ; Sipiana's death ; some farther anecdotes of her character, with the authoress's remarks thereon, and a hint to her fair readers relative to the use of the cosmetick.

I Must do Sipiana the justice to acknowledge, very much to her honour, that she behaved herself to me upon this melancholy occasion with great humanity and good-nature ; she endeavoured, as soon as she decently could, to collect the small remains of my shattered fortune

into one sum, and placed it out at interest for me to the best advantage : she moreover assur'd me, that I should be extremely welcome to continue with her if I chose it, and that she should esteem it an obligation; particularly as Aspatia, her daughter by her first husband, whom I once just mention'd, continued to live still with her father's brother.

I confess, I could not help looking upon this obliging offer as much too powerful a temptation for any body in my circumstances to resist ; nor will my readers be at all surpriz'd that I accepted it, notwithstanding the character I have already given of Sipiana's odd disposition, if they will please to consider that I was as yet but very young, had lost both my parents, and was now left wholly without any other guide, than that of my own prudence, to conduct me through a world surrounded on every side with numberless difficulties and dangers: where youth, to say nothing of beauty, generally proves a snare to seduce the heedless, hapless owner into follies of every kind.

I observed, as my years and judgment increased, that Comus was ever ready to present his delicious cup to the unwary traveller, and that most people seemed strongly inclined to drink deep of the
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chanting liquor, the fatal effects whereof I soon beheld with horror, and alarm'd by the dangers and misfortunes, to which I saw numbers were, on this account exposed, I determin'd to keep myself always the more tenaciously on my guard: in vain therefore did pleasure in a thousand different forms sollicit my youthful imagination; a lively sense of my present condition soon suppress'd every rising propensity thereto, and virtue guarded by religion enabled me effectually to escape all the temptations of a flattering and deceitful world.

I now by degrees became daily more sensible, that, by a proper exertion of my faculties, I had greatly enlarged my understanding, and strengthened my judgment; and soon began to feel, not merely a speculative repentance, but a useful a practical kind of sorrow for the loss of that time I had so miserably thrown away in vanity and folly; this inspired me with a resolution to redeem the same if possible; and the method I judg'd to be most effectual for that purpose, was by endeavouring totally to eradicate all the untoward habits and wrong impressions, which the motives to that very vanity and folly, and the encouragement they had particularly received from the man-
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ner of my education hitherto had very powerfully enforced.

I considered that a young woman, who is left, like me, without either father, mother, or almost any other friend, and intirely mistress of her own actions, at so early a season of life, can hardly be too circumspect in regard even to the appearances of things; for she can scarcely take any one step that may not, in some degree, endanger her reputation; if she is observed to keep a great deal of company, censure, 'tis more than probable, will soon become busy in affixing to her character, whether with truth or without it, the sully'ing imputation of levity and extravagance, and often likewise that of a consummate coquette; if she confines the extent of her acquaintance, as wisdom dictates, to a few select friends only, she is then charitably supposed to cultivate certain secret connections, that are not always very favorable to honour; in short, most people seem to think that they have a right to pass their judgment upon her with less reserve and less charity, because they know she has nobody to be responsible for her conduct.

In this situation therefore I judg'd it to be the wisest course I could take, to embrace Sipiana's friendly invitation, and
continue

continue to live on with her ; who, tho' she spent almost her whole time in a kind of retirement, could however, at her age, be exposed to no malevolent insinuations on that account : and here indeed, tho' I was supposed, in the opinion of the gay and sprightly, to breathe merely in stupid obscurity, yet the consciousness of my own innocence, the freedom from temptation or example to do wrong, together with the state of tranquillity and content which I now enjoyed, sufficiently compensated, in my estimation, for the loss of all those short-lived pleasures, with which the world, under the specious appearance of happiness, too often fatally deludes the giddy and the vain ; I was besides more fully convinced, on this occasion, of the truth and importance of those striking lines in Mr. Pope's Essay on Man ;

All fame is foreign, but of true desert,
Plays round the head, but comes not to the
heart ;

One self-approving hour whole years out-
weighs
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas.

The advantages, if such they may be called, that I had hitherto derived from education, were altogether superficial, confined wholly to the decoration of my person, while my mind continued almost totally

totally in dishabille ; I therefore applied myself from this time forward with ceaseless assiduity to the due cultivation thereof, and to my own endeavours I added every other auxiliary within the compass of my power, that could in any degree prove conducive to this end : 'tis true, the deplorable reduction in my circumstances would now by no means admit of any indulgence in the external articles of elegance and taste, nor suffer me to think that the prevalence of fashion, in such a situation as mine, could ever sanctify those profuse oblations that I saw so incessantly offered up by most other young women on the several altars of vanity ; in this case then I judg'd it to be my duty to correct immediately every exuberance whatsoever in fancy as well as dress, to retrench every superfluity, and prudently to confine the course of my expences to such particulars only as were most materially necessary ; by which means I was the better enabled to procure every foreign aid that I thought requisite to facilitate the progress of my education.

Upon a more intimate acquaintance and communication with my friend and patroness Sipiana, I became hourly more sensible of the necessity of acquiring some mental improvement, by observing such
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apparent defects in her, as rendered her, not to say contemptible, yet in a manner incapable of relishing any of the nobler blessings of social life, or indeed of presiding over the affairs of her household with that prudent inspection which œconomy, the parent of true charity and munificence, doth always indispensibly require.

Reading, with the assistance above-hinted, was now not an amusement only, it became indeed my supreme delight; as my mind, from those scenes of adversity before-mentioned, had taken a very grave turn, my taste, in regard to the choice of books, was consequently directed to those of morality and history; and I will from experience venture to affirm, that, by reading Seneca, Epictetus, and the antient history, as likewise many excellent treatises wrote by the moderns, people may come by insensible degrees to acquire a taste for virtue; it makes an impression on us that is of infinite advantage to our morals, while the inclination to vice seems, if not totally subdued, to be at least suspended for the time, and as it were corrected by the striking contrast of so many shining examples.

In the course of my literary acquisitions, I met with little or no interruption
from

disagreeable; I therefore never clothe myself in this time for the time to admit me to the due company, and to my own profit, I am sorry to be so far from being agreeable. I am not at all likely to receive any benefit from their society, in any of the important articles of my understanding, or even of my manners; for though my friends had certainly wrought an extraordinary change in many of my feelings, I was however still clearly of opinion that as the excess of virtue often increases vice, that of humility was frequently to be exerted to most advantage, when preferred from degenerating into meanness.

My acquaintance had hitherto been among my superiors, and indeed I had reason, on this occasion, to look upon it as a regular advantage, though I confess too, it was the only one I had to boast of from my residence with lady Meanwell; but this, however, was something to justify my acknowledgements to her ladyship; for there is unquestionably a certain elegance of taste and manners that is only to be acquired by conversing with people of first-rate understanding, who are at the same time in what is called the class of high

high life : we are apt to grow careless, when we converse with none but our inferiors, and even dull too, for want of that spirit of emulation which usually puts people upon exerting their talents to the best advantage, with a view either to excel or please : and here, I believe, I shall hardly be suspected of endeavouring to inculcate any-thing so absurd or unnatural as the practice of affectation in my own sex, when I affirm that there is a peculiar delicacy, or such at least, I think, there ought to be, in the sentiments of every woman of fashion : the expression whereof, throughout her whole deportment and conversation, should always distinguish her from the *lump* of her sex ; every impression therefore of this kind, that I had accidentally imbibed, I rather chose to encourage than divest myself of, though, in my present situation, I had indeed but few opportunities of practising them.

By way of relaxation from my literary amusements, I endeavoured to make myself mistress of all kinds of useful as well as fine needle works, and likewise of drawing, and painting in water-colours : I moreover thought it a duty, as well as an improvement, to render myself useful to Sipiana, in regulating and inspecting the
affairs

affairs of her family ; I acquainted her minutely with the several impositions of trade's-people and servants, that were daily practised on her, and such as I thought called loudly for redress ; 'tis true, indeed, she very much applauded my justice in so doing, but still she neither corrected this evil herself, nor did she empower me to do it, which even in her, I confess, surprized me extremely ; but however I acquiesced, and imputed it wholly to her want of judgment, as likewise to an habitual indolence of indisposition, which, poor lady, I believe, she unhappily mistook for a religious suggestion to keep herself as undisturbed from the cares of the world as she possibly could.

In this manner I passed a few years more of my life, and I may say, not unhappily, for I thought so at that time, and I have never since upon reflection had reason to change my opinion: we usually spent our summers at her father's seat in the country, so long as he lived ; and indeed the old gentleman always behaved to me with great good nature and politeness ; he would often say that providence had sent his daughter a companion which she ought to cherish as a gift from heaven. Here we always received great honours, or what were intended as such, from the whole

whole corporation ; who, with their wives and daughters, never failed to worry us with a multitude of uncouth civilities ; the men, as often as they could, to swallow down a hogthead of beer to the honour of their representative, and the women to learn fashions from the London ladies, as they called us by way of eminence ; and indeed dress was a subject which Sipiana was very fond of talking on, although she expressed herself even on this topic, trifling as it was, in an ungraceful manner, for her conceptions were mean, her understanding slow, and her language inelegant.

However in these scenes, far as they were from suiting perfectly with my taste and inclination, I enjoyed a kind of chearful tranquillity ; having now learned from experience that with the decent necessities of life, we may be happy anywhere if we know but how to be content with our condition ; I had accordingly habituated myself for some time to consider the least overtture of any irregular passion or appetite in me as a direct tendency towards an intestine insurrection, calculated to destroy that happiness, which the government of reason can alone preserve ; and therefore if at any time the pomp and affluence of other people provoked so much as one gentle sigh, I instantly suppressed

pressed it in the first emotion; for though my present fortune was far indeed from being extended to the larger measure of my wishes, I was yet industrious to supply the deficiency by endeavouring to contract those wishes within the limits of my fortune; consoling myself at the same time with this assurance, that virtue and innocence could render every place, and almost every condition, if not delightful, at least tolerable; and that without these, though no condition whatsoever could with truth deserve to be esteemed happy, yet even with them no condition on earth was totally exempted from a portion of infelicity; thus reason and reflection frequently assisted in reconciling me thoroughly to my own.

When we were in town, Aspatia, the daughter of Sipiana by her first husband, came usually once or twice a week, to pay her duty to her mother, but on these occasions, she generally received private instructions from her uncle, with whom she lived, and who was likewise her guardian, never to stay longer than a few hours at a time; he concluding, as I suppose, from the extraordinary contrast there was between the mother and her daughter, that a longer continuance, or more frequent intercourse, was not likely to be pro-

productive of much improvement to the latter : this young lady however honour'd me at that time with an unreserv'd friendship, which never ended but with her life; I had the highest esteem for her, as indeed she very justly deserved it, for she was possessed of every accomplishment both of mind and body, that could render any woman capable of inspiring, as well as of preserving, friendship.

Sipiana had for a considerable time laboured under an infirmity of body, which, in spite of all the best advice and assistance that could be procured, increased upon her daily, and was now confirmed into a languishing and incurable malady : in the first stages of this disorder, she settled her worldly affairs with the utmost resolution and composure, and very much to the satisfaction of all her relations and friends, who had any expectations from her; among others she did not forget me, but left me a handsome legacy to be paid immediately upon her decease by her daughter Aspatia; her illness was of such a nature that she was scarcely ever free from acute pain, which however she bore to the last with the truest christian patience, and resignation to the divine will; this I can the more confidently affirm, as I had now been never
once

been absent from her for some years, and she at last expired; her death indeed was, like her life, comfortable and free from terrors of evil; and the former human creature merely appeared in the next life, merely as an implicit obedience to what she supposed to be the divine commands in the former command; for she lived in the most pure times of piety and rectitude, that was not only proportionable to the extent of her understanding, but infinite beyond it.

Now this principle of obedience and submission to the divine will, is, I think, the only circumstance of Signora's whole character, that would seem to recommend to the imitation of our fair readers: and certainly some degree of education may, I think, be required to prevent thence; but altho' Signora may be justly allowed to have derived some benefit from having lived up to the extent of her understanding, yet to her it appears to be no small derogation from that merit, to whose account soever it is to be placed that her understanding was not cultivated and improved by education to the full extent of which it might have been capable: for hence it was that the very intention, as well as the end, of
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many of her virtues was actually defeated in the practice, by their being carried to an unreasonable extreme; and her devotion being thus in some measure the offspring of ignorance, degenerated almost into downright superstition or enthusiasm; so that upon the whole, it appears to be matter of some surprize, that she did not make a much worse figure in society.

And here I shall conclude this chapter with a short remark upon the oddity, as well as the mistaken merit of the foregoing character, and beg leave to observe to my fair country-women, that in order to their deriving any real benefit from the efficacy of my cosmetick, the powers of the understanding in its improved state only, and likewise those of the will, must always co-operate with mutual energy in the conduct of this process; or they will otherwise aspire to very little purpose at the character of true beauty; but instead thereof, by relying too intensely either on the flattering assistance of mere external embellishments, or the delusions of a heated imagination, they must necessarily dwindle into downright Sopianas, and be as far from attaining to the true character of virtue, as of beauty: my design, therefore, is to have them understand,

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that an exact compliance with the several dictates of duty, when it is the immediate result of clear conviction, will always be sure to raise such an agreeable harmony and cheerfulness in the mind, as soon becomes manifest in the countenance, sparkles with peculiar spirit in the eye, and visibly diffuses an irresistible grace over the whole person, that is powerful enough to rescue even ugliness and deformity from becoming otherwise the certain objects of aversion and disgust, and to give at the same time to beauty an additional dignity that considerably enhances all the force of attraction.

C H A P. XIII.

The secret of the grand cosmetick in a great measure illustrated; the improvement of the understanding, when it produces a manifest improvement in virtue and religion, produces consequently a proportionable degree of improvement in beauty and true happiness; the authoress strenuously recommends to her fair readers the perusal of a very antient book, wherein the principles of her system are laid down with the utmost precision, and the rectitude thereof demonstrated to the conviction of all human creatures, who have not either unhappily lost, or wantonly misapplied, their intellectual faculties.

IN the conclusion of the last chapter, I hinted to my fair readers the indispensable necessity of cultivating the understanding, and of correcting at the same time, with all possible diligence, every irregular and petulant tendency of the will, if they chose to avail themselves of the secret of that sovereign cosmetick, which I have undertaken to recommend wholly for their emolument; and indeed I have a particular pleasure in assuring myself that they cannot, without the most inju-

rious caprice, look upon such an undertaking as invidious, or condemn me on that account, since I only endeavour, by the most natural and direct means, to facilitate what is in fact extremely agreeable to themselves ; nay indeed, the ultimate end and constant object of all their secret all their tenderest wishes ; which yet, in the usual manner of their attempting it, infinite numbers of them, by a precipitate use of wrong measures, too often unhappily defeat ; I mean the important business of embellishing their own charms to such advantage, as may enable them the more effectually to extend their empire over the male world.

In this undertaking however, 'tis possible, I may at first sight seem guilty of some partiality towards my own sex ; but if so, it will soon appear to be a partiality so intirely reasonable and just, that was the use of my cosmetick to become once universal, so far would it be from lessening me in the favourable opinion even of those despotic lords of the creation, the men, that I am confident it would be a most effectual method to procure their gratitude and esteem ; for by raising the true intrinsic value of beauty to its proper standard, and establishing at the same time the dignity and importance of female

female merit upon a lasting and solid basis, I should certainly have a right to arrogate to myself the credit of augmenting in a very eminent degree the mutual happiness of both.

I am not ignorant of the numberless little artifices and contrivances that are daily practised in the female world with indefatigable pains, in order, as is pretended, to accomplish this important point ; nor am I at all surprized that they should so generally prove unsuccessful, since the means commonly made use of on those occasions, are not less absurd, than is the end in itself often disingenuous, and unworthy the character of true beauty. When the gay Flirtilla, for instance, meditates in earnest the conquest of her beau (whom in her heart perhaps she secretly despises) such commonly is the real folly of her conduct, that except the lover indeed happens to be full as stupid as she is vain, her utmost artifice, in the practis'd display of all her charms, is not able to secure the sudden conquest which her eyes have made ; for it soon becomes manifest, even to the lover himself, that he is by much the most inconsiderable part of her point in view ; though it is likewise manifest, that her industry has not been excited merely by the desire of a harmless

chance for sport neither : she rather seems to resemble those cruel mercenary hunters, who invidiously lure and persecute certain birds and beasts, only for the sake of possessing their delicate furs and gaudy plumage.

But suppose Flirtilla's ultimate end in view once obtained, that she is sovereign mistress of her wishes, and in lawful possession of her opulent prize ; are we from thence to pronounce her absolutely happy, or can she with strict justice be allowed to pronounce herself so ? The imagination, indeed, in a fit of madness, or other high intoxication, I will admit, is often strong enough to make the wretched patients believe themselves to be kings and queens, while the sober spectator, with a mixture of anguish and horror, too fruitlessly bewails their sad condition ; nay, the succession of a lucid interval does sometimes expose the whole error of this deplorable delusion even to themselves. The imagination therefore, in pronouncing upon happiness, should, I think, be always excluded ; but more especially so, if it happens to be in any degree disordered ; and such I have sometimes known it in patients, who have otherwise indeed appeared to be in perfect health, and who have thought themselves at the same time

so absolutely in possession of the use of reason un-impaired, as to require no additional assistance from the conviction of lucid intervals to set them right : I have known patients of this class seized with such a violent vertigo, or giddiness of the brains, upon some sudden elevation, or other extraordinary flow of good fortune, that one could not help supposing, from the oddity of their behaviour, though it was not directly frantic, that they believ'd themselves to be of a different species from what they were before : such then may be the extravagance of imagination, even in people who are not absolutely mad; but in this case, as confessedly in that of Flirtilla, it would surely be a high derogation from the very essence, as well as the dignity of happiness, to suppose that it could ever result naturally from such erroneous principles as these : since the libertine then, no more than the fool, chuses to be convinced that there is any other standard for happiness than that of opinion, he must be indulged, I think, in the enjoyment of the latter's paradise without interruption ; but true happiness nevertheless, as it can only flow from virtue and wisdom, can alone with justice be claimed as their reward.

In order therefore to render the improvement of beauty, upon the plan of my *cosmetick*, directly conducive to true happiness, as its ultimate end, I would beseech my fair country-women, in the acquisition of this improvement, to employ such means only as are most probable and most likely to succeed; and to this purpose, how strange soever such a position may possibly appear to many of them, the early and diligent exercise of the intellectual faculties, properly circumscrib'd is always sure to operate with surprising efficacy, though it cannot be said to prevail finally, till, as a test of such application, it has produced that unerring rectitude of heart; and that strength of judgment, which, if they do not actually constitute the essence of true beauty, do at least so far influence all its operations, that without their assistance its effects are, for the most part but very inconsiderable :

But that I may not be misunderstood upon this occasion, nor seem rashly to expose my fair readers, in the pursuit of these important acquirements, to the imputation of any-thing so unamiable as scholastic pedantry, or the ridiculous affectation of critical and profound learning in women; I would observe, that, however learning and science, in every other branch

branch thereof, may with great propriety be engrossed by the men, as their peculiar province, 'tis yet no inconsiderable nor indeed ignoble part of it, that consists in restraining and adjusting the passions, in regulating the will and affections, and, as the certain consequence of these, in heightening and embellishing beauty to the utmost degree of perfection it is capable of: this, I say, is a part of science, which the men, for their own sakes, as well as ours, will never condemn us for cultivating to all possible advantage; and indeed, upon the due cultivation of this branch alone, depends the whole force and success of my cosmetick: in short, it is giving previously to the men the most indisputable security that we shall make good wives, good mothers; and not less faithful friends, than agreeable companions; which, after all the haughty airs that misinformed beauty can assume, is the only consistent end it can have in view, that is possibly productive of true happiness: virtue and wisdom are the fundamental principles on which this science is built, and in proportion as we advance nearer towards perfection in the acquisition of these, it is no uncommon thing to observe our features lighten up by degrees, 'till we come to

shine out at last in all the lustre of true beauty.

This then, I think, is encouragement sufficient to excite the utmost stretch of female industry ; but that such industry may be still farther supported by the certainty of an adequate reward, I think it my duty to shew, how essentially the use of that cosmetick, which I have undertaken to recommend to my fair country women, may contribute towards the attainment of such reward : this incomparable specific therefore, it must be observed, is totally different from all others, inasmuch as it can never operate with any success, except the patients thoroughly understand all the several ingredients of which it is compounded, and are from thence, by a kind of previous conviction, determined to try its efficacy ; but it must likewise be remarked, that the success of its operation is always discovered to be greater or less, in proportion to the progress that is made in the science above-mentioned ; which science, founded as it is on the unerring principles of virtue and wisdom, yet calculated in a peculiar manner also for the improvement of beauty, is no where to be learned to such perfection, as by a diligent and judicious application to those divine truths, which
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are so largely, and so emphaitcally inculcated, throughout the whole christian system.

This indeed is the fountain of true wisdom and consummate virtue: and therefore I hope that, in so enlightened an age as the present, I can offer no violence to the delicacy of my fair readers by the mention of any-thing so instructive, though unhappily at the same time so unfashionable as religion: but I likewise hope, I may still conceive a better opinion, if not immediately indeed of the strength of their judgment, yet at least of their regard for their own charms, when the matter is once fairly discussed to them, than to admit a supposition so confessedly injurious both to their understanding and their beauty; it being my intention, as I go along, to make religion a principal instrument to improve both to the acquisition of happiness, to reconcile my fair readers by degrees to the truth of this system from conviction, and to give them consequently a much more exalted idea of beauty, when thus connected with religion and true happiness, than even they themselves could fondly have entertained of it without these.

Nor is the free course of such my intention to be restrained by the idle ap-

prehesion of any bugbear of ridicule, tremendous as it may seem to others; since I am persuaded that the men will not only judge of that intention with candour, but allow also for those defects in female education, which I am here endeavouring to obviate, and which must always prevent a work's being executed with due correctness; and in regard to my fair readers themselves, for whose genius I have all imaginable honour, I am sorry to be persuaded that their time, for the most part, is too importantly engaged in the business of pleasure, and in pronouncing upon the elegance of dress, equipage, and fashions, to suffer them to throw any of it away in deciding the fate of such a composition as this: but I am determined in this matter from a motive which is still superior; since charity no less inclines than obliges me to pity, rather than despise the dissolute, the profane, and even the incorrigible scoffer.

Long observation, and a just opinion of the world, have rendred me equally inaccessible to the stings of ridicule, and the raptures of false glory; in me the designs of both are utterly disappointed; and it is therefore that I am the more sincerely filled with concern and astonishment,

ment, when I observe, amidst that infectious torrent of luxury, and corruption of manners, which has unaccountably poured in among us, that our very women, and even those of them who ought to have the most enlightened education, have not however escaped the fatal contagion; insomuch that female free-thinkers, and of consequence female libertines, can hardly now, with any propriety, be ranked in the number of those phenomena that are to be esteemed extraordinary; one flagrant proof of this (to instance in no more for the present) is the scandalous profanation that is made of the Lord's Day; which, like the rest of the week, I find, is now with equal ardor incontinently devoted to the more important duties of cards and company; but I beg my fair readers to recollect (for I presume they cannot but know) that the church of England) as by law established, keeps no market for the sale of indulgencies, dispensations, and absolutions; and that consequently the odds must be considerably against them in that respect, whenever they either sit down to play with those in communion with the church of Rome, from whence alone such illicit amusements could have been transplanted, or by any means make them the
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objects of their imitation by playing on such days : that however irresistible the influence of fashion may be pretended, the reputation of complying with it, in things that are essentially wrong, makes, upon cool reflection, but a miserable apology for the neglect of those that are indispensibly important ; in short, for the neglect of religion, the destruction of virtue, and the infamous abuse of beauty,

Perhaps they may tell me, and indeed I shall not scruple believing them if they should, that they have now actually expunged the fourth commandment from the decalogue ; but then I shall certainly believe likewise, that those who are capable of this, will, upon any fair opportunity that offers, as readily expunge the remaining nine : and that this assertion is founded in some degree of probability, is evident, I think, from the present facility which seems to prevail almost universally among the ladies, for dispensing so readily with all decorums that impose the least restraint or self-denial ; notwithstanding that such decorums are known to be the truest friends to beauty, because they are in truth the strongest safeguard to modesty and virtue : hence that confident and assured air, that indelicate exposure of form, which by imperceptible degrees

degrees grows familiar with indecency; and in the end seldom fails to beget a confirmed licentiousness of manners, and dissoluteness of conduct; these then, while they compose the much-admired, the emulated character of the present fashionable fine lady, do at the same time, in fact, commit such irreparable ravages both on her virtue and beauty, as very naturally fright away all men of sense, who are alone capable of communicating true happiness, from approaching her with any designs of honour; so that if this conduct be intended to procure happiness, it must either totally defeat its own purpose, or be allowed, in the opinion of all rational creatures, who happen to continue still in the possession of their senses, to approach no nearer towards that desirable end, than do in truth the transient raptures of a lunatic.

Solomon indeed might very justly affirm that vice, however gilded over by the specious denominations of pleasure, gallantry, or happiness, absolutely deformed beauty, and darkened in a peculiar manner the native charms of a female face; nay, that it was even like sackcloth upon her countenance; and Solomon, I believe, without any derogation from the real dignity of beauty in our days, may
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Be allowed, as a proper judge, to have perfectly well understood all the various movements of the female heart ; human nature, and the essential difference between moral good and evil, being, I suppose, the same in his time that they are in ours ; the nice distinction therefore between that propriety and impropriety of conduct, resulting from those several movements of the heart, which have so peculiar a tendency to animate or debase all the loveliness of female charms, can hardly be supposed to have escaped the celebrated sagacity of this royal philosopher ; so that his authority, in regard to the true basis of beauty, and indeed to the whole compass of female merit, may, I think, upon the present occasion, be admitted without the least hesitation.

I have already observed, that the connection between beauty and happiness was very close ; but surely the difficulty of making one the certain reward of the other, must be much greater than we women in general seem to comprehend ; or how otherwise could it happen, that such numbers as one observes to be transcendently gifted by nature for the accomplishment of this important purpose, should nevertheless so frequently fail of success ? I look upon virtue to be, in regard

gard to beauty, much what the soul is in regard to the body ; mere uninformed beauty, 'till it is animated and inspired by virtue, is absolutely lifeless and unattractive, the whole extent and duration of its powers being comparatively altogether inconsiderable ; upon this principle then I am to suppose the practice of virtue to be the most effectual means not only for setting off beauty to the best advantage, but also for securing true happiness as its ultimate end and just reward ; and therefore I know not how otherwise to account for the difficulty objected above, or indeed for the general blindness of my fair countrywomen to their true interest upon this occasion, than by supposing, what I believe to be the fact, that it requires a much better improved understanding than we commonly imagine, to practise virtue so successfully as to obtain thereby the desirable end in question ; I mean, however, such a practice of it as results immediately from a conviction of its rectitude, and tendency to true happiness.

But alas ! the present deplorable plan of female education utterly forbids our aspiring at any-thing like this ; and merely, as it seems to me, from the bugbear apprehension of our becoming rather ob-
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jects of ridicule than admiration; on that account ; such is the infatuation, such the general perversion of common sense in this matter : we are accordingly treated little better than dolls of a larger stature ; our outside, 'tis true, is studiously formed, and decorated to the utmost profusion of expence and folly ; and for what ? why truly just to catch the eye of some male-lilly, who is perhaps not many degrees less foolish and vain than ourselves ; to amuse him for a moment, or so, and when the date of novelty is once over, to be thrown aside with contempt, as incapable, upon experience, of supporting, for any considerable length of time, a series of rational happiness : and how indeed, in our untoward situation is it possible it should be otherwise ? Our manner of life, being the natural consequence of such an education, involves us almost inextricably in such scenes of trifling, such frivolous, not to say, criminal avocations, that we can scarcely allow ourselves time, so much as to think ; but much less to cultivate the understanding, so as to improve in virtue, religion, and true beauty : we are early distracted by the pressing solicitations of pleasure, vanity, and ambition, I will not add absolutely, by avarice also ; neither will I af-
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firm that our sufferings are cruelly enhanced by the pangs of love, so far at least as regards the sincerity of that generous passion; but if any-thing be wanting to complete the real wretchedness of our condition, pining envy is always sure to be officiously at hand; to all these then, and their unhappy effects, if not together, we at least alternately become an easy prey; for by the customary errors in our education, we are utterly deprived of that fund of fortitude and good sense, which might otherwise successfully instruct us how to resist and escape the several allurements that lead only to false happiness: we are moreover by this ill-judged turn in our education, precipitated in a manner headlong into life, into the midst of the most dangerous temptations, to make the best of our way through them, uninstructed in the principles and practice, and consequently unguarded by the tutelary dictates of religion, except in the mere external forms of it, and now indeed scarcely even in these: can it then happen otherwise, but that in our conduct we should generally betray the greatest marks of folly, not to say worse; and sooner or later meet with that misfortune, which we have in truth been taking so much pains to accomplish for ourselves.

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The fool indeed hath long since said in his heart, that there is no God ; from whence I infer, that a want of religion, even in those who may in every other respect be most consummately accomplished, is nevertheless an invincible proof of the want of a sound understanding ; supported therefore by this authority, as the gentlest reprehension that charity itself can suggest, I shall not scruple to pronounce in the same manner upon the fairest of my country-women, who may deserve to be ranked in the same class with the fool above mention'd ; and should they still continue obstinately deaf to this, I'll conjure up some powerful spell, that shall blast by degrees the loveliest of their charms, and make them appear more frightful in the eyes of men of sense, than so many wrinkled hags : in short, the pretence to virtue or wisdom, to happiness or true beauty, exclusive of the animating influence of religion, to put the mildest construction upon the matter, is little better than the ridiculous error of rank affectation ; but it is in fact still infinitely worse ; for it in some measure resembles that shocking, that criminal custom, which is gaining ground among us, of daubing over some of the loveliest complexions that nature ever tinged, with

with the no less preposterous, than horrid pollutions of paint, which is being palpably in a collusion to defraud ourselves; but besides all this, such a pretence is downright hypocrisy; and common sense, no less than religion, has in all ages stigmatized the hypocrite as the most egregious fool.

I would willingly endeavour therefore to convince my fair readers, who may in general perhaps be fashionably ignorant in this matter, that the original design and institution of religion does by no means injoin the performance of anything that is terrible to its votaries: 'tis in truth so far from countenancing any of those rigorous austerities which are in use among enthusiasts, that it is highly compatible with the enjoyment of all innocent amusements, which providence, with the utmost beneficence, did, no doubt, ordain purposely to soften and alleviate the numberless inevitable miseries of human life, and which certainly constitute a very considerable part of the felicity of rational creatures here: I would further wish them to believe, what is really the fact, that they may be very religious, and yet at the same time extremely charming, and perfectly elegant; that they may be likewise extremely chearful
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and entertaining, nay witty, without being either profane or libertine : and here indeed I would particularly endeavour to remove a certain gloomy objection that I have heard frequently urged to the prejudice of religion, which, I am sorry to say, is but too apt to seduce the tender and uninstructed minds of young women; it is this, that the sincere and regular practice of religious duties does generally sour the temper, and warp it from the true relish of happiness; that it renders life by this means little better than one continued scene of melancholy, mortification, and joyless existence; whereas in truth most of the evils and vexations of this world are directly owing to the neglect or contempt of religion, one great end of which is carefully to guard all the avenues that lead to our passions, and to prohibit their indulgence, at least to such a vicious excess, as must otherwise prove destructive of that very happiness, which with moderation they were certainly intended to produce : and in regard to the natural evils of life, the keenest anguish even of these, if it be not totally removed, is however rendered always far more tolerable, and often considerably alleviated by a seasonable recourse to the friendly assistance of religion; and by the pleasing consolation

tion of being conscious that we have not incurred those evils by any acts of wilful disobedience to its precepts, which is a resource that is intirely cut off from the dissolute, the impious, and profane; such indeed is the importance of religion to the true happiness of the human species even in this life, that every-thing around us seems to inculcate to an attentive mind some useful admonition, some instructive lesson of wisdom, which is immediately relative to this subject; if therefore to the serious contemplation of these, and to our own sad experience of the depraved and limited state of human nature, we still add those shining lights, those inspired truths revealed in the gospel, it will then, I think, be as much past all doubt, that there is but one happiness for mankind, as that there is but one God; and that the pleasures, riches, and honours of this world, pursued and indulged as they constantly are to such excess, can no more constitute that happiness, than an unlimited supply of liquids can administer an effectual remedy for the dropfy. Is there any dream then so confessedly ridiculous as the dream of life, which amuses us with the neglect and disregard of what is so emphatically important? Or is there any folly like the folly of the world, which is
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too wife and too busy to be at leisure for such reflections as these?

As I have the true interest of my own sex very much at heart, 'tis natural to believe that I am no less sincerely than ardently disposed to exert the whole force of my poor abilities in their service; and consequently that I should be desirous, though with all imaginable humility, of proposing every scheme that might seem in any degree practicable for its advancement; I would accordingly then, as what I have found from my own experience to be one very effectual method for that purpose, beg leave to recommend to their most diligent perusal, a certain antiquated book, that has long been a favorite companion of mine; which, though 'tis possible many of them may have heard of, yet sure I am, from the general tenor of their life and conversation, that few, very few of them, I fear, have considered the subject matter thereof with such a degree of attention and inclination, as is alone capable of deriving any benefit from its merits; notwithstanding too, that this same old book indisputably contains the very best system of true politeness, among infinite other instructive articles, for the embellishment of female charms, which is to be found in any that are now extant;

tant; but here indeed I the more particularly specify politeness, or a certain elegance of manners, and give to it almost the dignity of a virtue, because I know it is the darling attribute of the fair, the peculiar characteristic of the sex, and what must ever be considered as inseparably connected with true grace and beauty, except we should at last be unhappily obliged to confine our ideas of grace and beauty merely to the inanimate representations of them by painters and sculptors: in short true politeness, such I mean, as is not the offspring of affectation and grimace, is the liveliest picture of humanity and integrity of heart, 'tis the assiduous handmaid of beauty, and often the successful harbinger of love; and moreover always shews mankind on the outside what they ought really to be within.

But to give some farther account of this obsolete book, the use whereof I so earnestly wish to see once more revived amongst my fair country-women; I apprehend, they will readily be convinced that my partiality in its favour can by no means be thought unreasonable or unjust, and that I stand not single in my good opinion of it, since some of the greatest geniuses, as well as the best men, whom this, or I believe any other nation, ever

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produced, have paid the highest honours to its merit; such, for instance, as our Newton, Boyle, Lock, Addison, Pope, and numberless others; but although I am far from insinuating by this, that an implicit obedience in such matters ought to be precipitately paid even to the authority of such great names as these; yet surely their superior learning and judgment, added to their well-known integrity of life and manners, deserves some attention, and may at least, I think, be so far depended upon with safety, as to tempt us to make such experiments ourselves, as may happily produce a concurrence of our own conviction to establish their authority: these gentlemen then have on various occasions asserted, and not barely so, for they have proved their assertions with all that strength of reason, perspicuity, and precision, wherewith truth should always be demonstrated, that in regard to the antient volume now in question, to consider it only as a mere human composition, for genuine purity of style, for true sublimity of matter, and energy of thought, for the irresistible persuasion of its precepts, and the forcible impression of truth, both on the understanding and the heart, but above all for the dignity and importance of the several

veral subjects therein treated, there never was any thing yet wrote, that has been transmitted down to their times, which could bear the least degree of comparison in point of excellence with ~~this~~ ^{the} same old book: but if something still more nearly interesting to the true happiness of rational creatures be added to the foregoing account, if in the design and composition of this work certain marks and characters of wisdom still superior be plainly distinguishable to the virtuous and the humble mind, all then but the libertine, the presumptuous, and the invincibly stupid, must surely feel conviction strong, and yield to the transcendent force of its instruction.

I hope therefore, it is not altogether improbable, but some of my fair readers may by this time be desirous of knowing the title of a book, which comes recommended to them with so many advantages; but I am to hope likewise, that their curiosity will not be quite at an end, and that they will not throw my book aside with rage when I inform them that the very volume I am here endeavouring to conciliate their regard for, is in truth no other than the Bible: to those who are already acquainted with the merit of this book, I shall presume to offer nothing in its favour, nor even so much as attempt

to guess at their number; be that however great or small, with such, I am very certain, it will need no other advocate than its own intrinsic worth: but it is possible, ~~as~~ I observed above, that some of my fair readers may have only just transiently heard that there was such a book, without receiving any particular information in regard to its contents; and others perhaps not even so much as this; now with both these, I honestly confess, I could almost resolve to deal so far artfully, as to endeavour, by the assistance of novelty, which has always so many bewitching attractions for us women, to bribe their curiosity into a patient perusal of the whole work; with the previous assurance however, (which by the way I am confident I should not violate) that it contains a most complete system of polite, curious, and useful knowledge, with the best models, that are now extant, for forming a true taste, a graceful elegance, and a sound judgment; and what may be perhaps of still greater consequence in our apprehension, that it contains the great, the inestimable secret of improving beauty to so exquisite a degree, that its fair readers, if they study it with due attention, are very soon likely to become perfect adepts
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in the whole mystery of charming irresistibly : therefore if such considerations as these can have any weight in their estimation, except they happen to be either insensible of their own importance to the last degree of dullness, or most incorrigibly volatile (not to say worse) they must, I think, be tempted to make the experiment which I here propose to them, and then confess, that they had never before employed so much of their time so essentially to their advantage.

But to be serious, I most sincerely wish, that it was in my power to do all the justice to this excellent book, which the high importance of its merit to mankind demands ; and particularly such as might engage the attention of my fair countrywomen a little more frequently on a subject which is so extremely interesting to the security of their true happiness : I would not however have them imagine from hence, because it cannot fairly be inferr'd, either from any thing that I have already advanced, or indeed from any part of my intention, in the recommendation of this book, that they are consequently to be found with their bibles always in their hands, or to be secluded from a moderate enjoyment of all the innocent pleasures of life : far from it ; the

christian religion enjoins not this severity; it is an intelligible, it is a reasonable religion, and calculated to promote the whole happiness of intelligent and reasonable creatures: the rule and sum of this religion is faithfully contained in the book above-mentioned, and I would only beg of my fair readers to act just as consistently upon this occasion, when they arrive at an age which renders such a conduct indispensibly necessary, as they are generally wont to do upon most others; that is, I would have them judge for themselves; because they can in truth claim no more merit from the virtue of other people, but particularly from their conviction in this matter, than a very plain woman can derive to herself from the inimitable graces of a first-rate beauty: in the important choice of a party of pleasure, for instance, in the choice of a suit of birth-day cloaths, and sometimes even in the choice of an husband, they will assume a proper spirit, exert their own faculties, and decently avow the natural right of free will; yet in the business of religion, and the practice of virtue. as if matters of infinitely less concernment, they either seem to be actuated wholly by the impulse of fashion, or to depend implicitly upon the judgment of others,

others, and that indeed, not only in regard to the choice of their religion, and the motives of their virtue, but in regard also to the practice of both.

But surely this can never be esteemed the conduct of intelligent creatures; such I mean, as is always suggested by the true spirit of wisdom and virtue; very far from it; it must rather be a conduct suggested wholly by the dictates of vice and folly; for it is defeating obstinately the kindest intentions of nature, it is perverting some of the choicest blessings of heaven by acts of the basest ingratitude; 'tis in short wantonly bartering true happiness for false, and unpardonably degrading at the same time all the native loveliness of beauty to the vile level of the most hideous deformity: I will allow indeed, if the flattering power of charming at any rate, be their supreme delight, their sole point of view, that a knave may be very deeply smitten, and doubtless often is with the charms of a fair idiot's fortune; but it is contrary to the natural order of things, that any man but a fool, should ever be charmed with her beauty; I must suppose therefore, that the happiness resulting from alliances of this species, if it deserves the name of happiness, can never be an object either of envy or desire, to

any woman who has not absolutely disclaimed all pretensions to the merit of true beauty, religion, delicacy, and even common sense.

Thus then have I endeavoured, though I confess in a very crude and unconnected manner, to give my fair readers a transient view at least of the irreparable injuries which their charms sustain, particularly from the exclusion of religion out of their plan of operations: and here I would be understood to mean, not barely the name of religion, since experience, upon many other occasions, as well as the present, convinces us that the names of things may be inviolably preserved, while the reality of the things themselves is intirely lost; and therefore I beg leave to affirm, that I explicitly mean here the essence of religion; such a settled conviction of its principles and precepts, as is capable of producing a suitable and uniform influence on the whole life and conversation of each of my fair country women, by the regular practice of every social, and every christian virtue: they would in truth become infinitely more amiable, nay quite angelic, by such a conduct as this; nor would they then find the men, in general, wanting either in point of love, honour, or
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good sense, to acknowledge the force and reasonableness of this assertion; however they may have been hitherto unaccountably biassed to fall in with the foibles of the sex, and to sooth their follies, as if it was the only effectual method to secure their esteem.

But it is high time to acknowledge that this chapter has already very much exceeded its intended limits, for which, if it should be thought a fault, I humbly entreat my readers pardon: the subject indeed was interesting and important, being nothing less than the true happiness of my whole sex; if my apprehensions on that account should be merely imaginary, the anxiety, which must necessarily have attended them, while they were supposed real, can then be only mine; and must at least evince the sincerity of my good wishes for the true interest of my fair country women; while I should hope, it would likewise plead my apology for avowing that, if such should be thought necessary: but if those apprehensions should be founded in reality, the exquisite misery arising from thence must then be wholly their's; mine being in that case at worst but the crime of impertinence in alarming them

with the dangers of a precipice before they had tumbled quite down.

I shall suspend the conclusion of this chapter no longer than while I subjoin a quotation, not altogether foreign to the main purport of it, taken from Doctor Young's inimitable poem, I mean his night thoughts.

Yet would thou laugh, but at thine own expence,
 This counsel strange should I presume to give, ---
 " Retire, and read thy Bible to be gay,"
 There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace;
 Ah! do not prize them less, because inspir'd,
 As thou and thine, are apt and proud to do.
 If not inspir'd, that pregnant page had stood,
 Time's treasure! and the wonder of the wise!
 Thou think'st, perhaps, thy soul alone at stake;
 Alas! should men mistake thee for a fool; ---
 What man of taste for genius, wisdom, truth,
 Though tender of thy fame, could interpose?
 Believe me, sense, here, acts a double part,
 And the true critic is a Christian too.

C H A P. XIV.

Farther continuation of the authoreſs's ſtory in relation to herſelf; in which, as interwoven in ſome meaſure with her affairs, ſhe gives her readers ſome account of Fabius, the uncle of Aſpatia, and likewise the character of that lady, and her happy union with Hortenſius.

THE favorite ſubject, upon which I dwelt ſo long in my laſt chapter, has occaſioned ſuch an interruption in the courſe of my narrative, as demands from me an apology, particularly to all thoſe of my fair readers, who think that chapter wholly without its uſe; and yet for their ſake, as well as my own, I am almoſt willing to flatter myſelf, that either their number muſt be very ſmall, or that not one of them requires the officious, though ſalutary inſtruction contained therein; however, the goodneſs of my intention at leaſt, being, I hope, in both caſes implicitly admitted, I ſhall proceed to inform them, that by the death of Sipiana I was now left more abſolutely

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ly my own mistress, than I had been before, though I wanted as yet some years of what the law pronounces to be the period of full age.

Self-love, I confess, had a much greater share in the present scene of my affliction, than any recollection of the merit of my departed friend, save that of gratitude, for the many favours I had received from her : although I was not unacquainted with the mistaken motives, or injudicious exercise of her virtues, I nevertheless very highly revered the goodness of her heart; but still the sad reflection upon my own solitary condition affected me for some time so sensibly as to exclude almost every other consideration; and would in all probability have done so much longer, had I not very seasonably received the consolation of knowing that Portia, the sister of Tradewell, one of the best, the wisest, and most amiable of her sex, intended, as soon as she could settle some affairs in France, relative to her fortune, to come and reside for the remainder of her life in England: she informed me in the most affectionate manner, that she now looked upon herself as my mother, and consequently begged leave to insist that I would come to no resolution,
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in regard to my future destination, till I had previously taken her opinion upon the matter ; and hoped, I should have no objection to her proposal of having me to live altogether with herself: this news indeed was so agreeable as to give me the truest pleasure I was at that time capable of tasting ; for I had been taught from my earliest infancy to entertain the highest opinion of this excellent woman ; from whose instructive conversation and example, I now promised myself, and afterwards did derive such solid advantages as proved the surest means of acquiring the long series of happiness I have since enjoyed.

But till the welcome period of her arrival, which however happened to be longer than either of us expected, I should still have thought myself greatly embarrassed, almost in any other situation, had not Fabius, the worthy uncle of my tender and faithful friend Aspatia, given me a most obliging invitation to his house ; which was seconded so powerfully by the entreaties of his niece, that I could not refuse him, at least till the arrival of my aunt ; indeed my being in the same family with my beloved Aspatia was much too agreeable a circumstance

stance to be easily resisted: this young lady, as I observed before, was the daughter and only surviving child of my friend and mother-in-law Sipiana; but directly the reverse of her in every other particular, except in the humanity of her disposition; she had been appointed by her mother the sole executrix of her last will, and the fortune which consequently accrued to her from thence, tho' far from being inconsiderable, was however greatly so, when compared with that she inherited from her father; yet even this, added to the certain expectations she had from her uncle, who was rich, made altogether by much the smallest part of her merit, as my readers will be ready to acknowledge with me, when I have given them the faithful detail of her character.

Fabius, her uncle and guardian, who was at this time an old batchelor, was nevertheless intirely free from the particularities of that whimsical sect; he was chearful, he was sociable and facetious; and tho' he could not now with decency participate in all the pleasures and amusements of young people, yet he still seemed to feel, by reflection, a generous a refined sort of happiness, from that which
they

they enjoyed on such occasions; but he was a man of good understanding, and joined to a thorough knowledge of the world the utmost integrity of heart: he beheld and watched with inexpressible delight all the dawning virtues of his niece, and resolved to have them diligently improved, under his own immediate inspection, by every advantage which the best regulated education could bestow; nor was he disappointed in the success of his plan: he had beheld indeed with no less concern the want of such an education in her mother, and determin'd that Aspatia should not suffer on the same account; he provided therefore the best masters of every kind that could be found, and had in a few years the exquisite satisfaction of observing that his niece was become perfect mistress, not only of such accomplishments as help to constitute the mere exterior part of grace and elegance, but of all those likewise, which may be justly allowed to adorn human nature, to mend the heart, improve the understanding, and confirm the irresistible power of true beauty.

Aspatia's time was for the most part so profitably employed, that she contrived to make even those hours, which she dedicated

dicated to diversions, subservient if possible to the same laudable purpose ; when ever it happened otherwise, as must sometimes be inevitably the case, it was indeed a sacrifice to civility, yet made without any apparent reluctance : a favourite study with her for some time, by way of mere amusement only, was that of poetry ; the genuine beauties whereof she entered into with great delight, and a superior delicacy of taste ; such as a woman of her improved understanding may well be allowed capable of acquiring from a judicious perusal of all the best authors, both in the English, French, and Italian languages ; nor was she a stranger even to those of the Greek and Roman poets, so far as the best English translations of them could inform her ; in short, she seemed to ascend the lofty seat of the muses with a very good grace, but never to be impertinent, nor to contract from thence the least affectation of any excellence, or fame, superior to the less enlightened of her own sex ; in these excursions she was generally accompanied by Milton and Pope, as her most admired guides, whose votary she continu'd to be with particular attachment, till time and experience, by allaying in some measure

measure the youthful ardour of her fancy, had given a proportionable degree of maturity and vigour to her judgment, excited in her a strong desire of some more solid knowledge, and led her from the aerial regions of poetry down to the more instructive page of sober history ; which, though it may be perhaps a scene less pleasing to the imagination, affords however a more certain path, and a much more lasting gratification to the understanding.

Upon the best models then, that could be extracted from hence, and accommodated with propriety to the customs and fashion of her own time, she completed the improvement of her mind, and rendered it thus a fit inhabitant for her lovely form : her natural disposition, placid and humane, was by this education heighten'd into all the rational, but exquisite feelings of true charity and benevolence ; yet guarded at the same time equally from weakness and ostentation : her person was tall, graceful, and exactly well-shaped ; if in any respect defective, it was in being rather a little too thin ; and though perhaps in vulgar estimation she might not be rank'd in the class of first rate beauties, yet by all who had the happiness of her acquaintance

acquaintance she was confessedly allowed to possess many more charms than any beauty of her time: she had indeed something so inimitably genteel, so irresistibly engaging in her address, that all within the enchanting circle thereof could not help becoming instantly her admirers; and even strangers, who could only in public observe the outward elegance and propriety of her behaviour, were nevertheless always tempted to consider her manner and whole appearance as that of a woman of the first distinction: such is the prevailing influence of true beauty; and such, in truth, the peculiar efficacy of that prescription, which points out so successfully the whole art of acquiring it; wisdom and virtue are the medium, thro' which this prescription operates; as love, friendship, and happiness are, in an eminent degree, the certain effects which it produces.

My situation with so amiable a companion was indeed truly delightful; all my faculties, such as they were, had here a constant opportunity of exertion and improvement; nor was there any-thing that could possibly contribute either towards amusement or instruction, but was industriously sought out for our mutual emolu-

emuolument : the care even of improv-
 ing my little fortune to the best advantage,
 was a circumstance that did by no means
 escape the vigilant attention of Fabius,
 who generously took the management
 thereof wholly upon himself, and account-
 ed with me in such a manner, as redound-
 ed not less to the honour of his own in-
 tegrity and judgment, than it did essen-
 tially to my interest : so many favours,
 conferred with so much delicacy, de-
 manded very justly, as indeed they very
 sincerely had, the highest proofs of grati-
 tude and acknowledgement in my power;
 but yet my friendship was engaged by
 motives still more noble ; it was founded
 in a thorough experience of that virtue,
 which alone must ever be the object, as
 well as the cement of true friendship ;
 all else is but the vile, the fordid inter-
 course of interest or vice ; at best but a
 mercenary reciprocation of benefits :
 mine for my Aspatia was of a very diffe-
 rent kind ; it was the result of a very long
 acquaintance, founded on a disinterested
 esteem for her many amiable qualities, and
 totally free from every other mixture of
 self-love, than what arose almost involun-
 tarily from a principle of emulation, and
 from contemplating that similitude of sen-
 timents

timents and manners, which united us still more closely : in short, we passed our time in that kind of felicity which is always capable of being still further enhanced by reflection; and such as gave me a most agreeable fore-taste of what I was to expect from the society of the excellent Portia.

But this delightful scene began soon to receive some interruption ; for the uncommon share of merit, and fine accomplishments, which my friend was mistress of, became by degrees so conspicuous as to attract universal admiration ; and the flattering circumstance of her possessing likewise so considerable a fortune, was, no doubt, an additional incentive to the addresses of many, by whom her alliance was now courted with the utmost ardour and importunity : and yet, upon all those occasions, prudence, the faithful handmaid of reason, the cautious monitor of heedless passion, and the peculiar guardian of female honour, securely defended her against that whole train of persecution and impertinence, to which young ladies of extraordinary fortune are not unusually exposed ; for as she was equally free from vanity and coquetry, she had as little to apprehend from the insinuating wiles

wiles of adulation, as from the stratagems of falshood and intrigue ; her judgment, and her discretion, never admitting any opportunity for the attempts of either : and as she was actuated not less by a principle of honour than of virtue, she was an enemy to the practice of all dissimulation, and disdained the low artifice of supporting beauty by the ridiculous distinction of having always a number of well-dress'd worthless coxcombs in her train : she consequently suffered neither false hopes nor fears to keep those who had once declared themselves her lovers, a single moment in suspense, but instantly dismissed them upon the first overture, yet with so much candour and politeness, that tho' they ceased from thence to be her professed lovers, they ceased not however to be her admirers : and this conduct, how rarely soever it may be practised, is, in truth, no more than a debt, which every woman of true virtue justly owes to her own dignity, her delicacy, and her fame ; the dictates of common sense, as well as those of virtue, enforce the obligation strongly ; and wherever it is wantonly dispensed with, the title to one, if not to both of these, is rendered greatly liable to suspicion ; nay truly policy absolutely forbids

forbids that happiness should ever confirm the triumph of beauty upon other terms.

The worthy uncle of Aspatia, gifted as he certainly was, with great penetration and experience in the ways of mankind, confided however implicitly in the discretion of his niece : nor was this confidence misplaced ; he saw into the very principles by which her whole conduct was governed ; and as he had sufficient reason to assure himself from thence, that in an affair of such importance as that of marriage, her judgment most undoubtedly would always temper and direct her inclination, he determined to leave her choice intirely un-influenced by any of those numberless temptations from ambition or opulence, which had been frequently thrown in his way : the old gentleman, who had nothing so ardently in view for his niece as her real happiness, judged very wisely that the common notions of happiness, which were so eagerly adopted by the generality of mankind, being altogether phantastical, were so far from falling in with his system, thaty the often prov'd the actual means of its destruction : he had therefore too much good sense, too
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much integrity, and too sincere an affection for her, to recommend, or seem to countenance, any plan that was inconsistent with these principles: he reflected with horror upon the folly, as well as the crime, of sacrificing a fine young lady possessed of every virtue and every accomplishment that could render any woman the object of true happiness, merely that the world might think her happy, when she herself was, perhaps, most consummately miserable: such kind of sacrifices he always looked upon as scenes of downright prostitution, however softened by the almighty letter of the law, or palliated by the delusive though specious appearance of some imaginary title of honour annexed thereto: but the sentiments of Fabius, in regard to the essence of true happiness, had too great a degree of rectitude in them to be at all influenced by the frothy ambition of making his niece a *muskbroom*-peerefs: such an alliance would, in his opinion, add no honour to his family; because he thought, and very justly too, that virtue gave always a higher degree of dignity, than it was in the power of any earthly monarch to confer; and that an ample fortune, dispended according to
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the dictates of virtue, conferred a much truer kind of nobility, than all the pompous patents of the greatest emperors could do: Fabius, therefore, had too much spirit, as well as virtue, to tag servilely at the tail of a set of people, who despised, in fact, every other consideration but that of wealth; which, they thought could alone give them the means of happiness in their own way; that is, of being still more incontinently vicious, debauched, and corrupt: a man of this turn, let his rank, fortune, and nominal merit be ever so great, he judged to be a match highly improper for his niece; as he thought nothing ought to be risked at the certain expence of happiness; nor was she indeed less sensible of the inevitable evils, with which such alliances are generally pregnant; for she was convinced, beyond the power of perversion, that there was no such thing as true happiness without virtue, and that it was consequently impossible that any man could ever be induced to esteem as a merit in his wife, that of which he himself was utterly void, and with the want whereof her very prudence must hourly upbraid him.

Amongst

Amongst the gentlemen who were admitted to visit at the house of Fabius, (and these were none but people of the most approved character) was the justly celebrated Hortensius ; a man of a graceful figure, polite address, and an excellent understanding ; he was of good extraction, though not immediately allied to any of the great ; nor had he indeed any farther connections with them, than what his distinguished abilities at the bar had rendered full as necessary for the security of their interest, as for the advancement of his own : he set out originally upon a very small foundation, the pittance only of a younger brother's fortune ; but his superior talents, joined to indefatigable application, soon gave him an opportunity of acquiring both wealth and fame, much beyond the compass either of his avarice or ambition : to his remarkable skill, in the knowledge and practice of the law, he added every grace of eloquence, and every other power of soft persuasion ; and was, in short, most eminently blessed with all the advantages that are requisite to form a perfect orator ; yet these shining talents were never prostituted, nor vilely hired out, for the purposes of lucre, to gild over any iniquitous cause ; he never departed from the principles he

first set out with ; for, bad as the world was, he soon found that his interest depended as essentially upon his integrity, as upon the reputation of superior eminence in his profession.

The true interests of his country, and the preservation of all its civil and religious rights, he judged, could never be effectually maintained otherwise, than by an invariable adherence to the principles of the constitution ; according to that excellent and equitable plan proposed at the revolution ; and that whatever deviations from thence may at any time be brought about, whether by the overbearing increase and influence of power in one party, or by any obstinate and unreasonable usurpations in the other, under what pretences soever assumed by either, must sooner or later, if not seasonably reconciled, and reverted to, by the direction of the plan abovementioned, be inevitably attended with consequences fatal to the peace and liberty of these nations ; with general discontent, if not disturbance at home, and with the certain loss of commerce, credit, and glory abroad.

These I well remember to have been the principles of his political system ; he had early adopted them from the strictest enquiry into every branch of our government

ment and constitution; they were often the subject of his most serious consideration, as the demonstration of their utility was the constant object of his endeavours in that house, where he had the honour of a seat to the time of his death; and where he was always heard with more particular attention, as he had never attached himself to any party, either from a malignant spirit of opposition, a mercenary prospect of interest, or from the delusive baits of ambition: yet with all the punctuality of his attendance upon the publick business, he by no means neglected the care of his own fortune, which daily increased; and indeed the extraordinary success thereof was not more justly the result of genius and industry, than it was the peculiar merit of his universal benevolence and stedfast integrity; for to the indigent and oppressed, his purse and his advice were ever open.

Such then was the character of the man, on whom Arspacia had for some time looked with a favourable eye; Hortensius had indeed long entertained a secret passion for her, yet without presuming to avow it more expressly, than by a constant perseverance in all those little offices of assiduity and respect; which, though to the parties themselves, from the mere

force of sympathy, they may be intimations highly significant, are however, to the indifferent spectator, such only as politeness can always rescue from the busy imputation of particularity : and the delicacy of this conduct operated much more successfully with Arspacia, than all the ill-timed fervour of a more passionate address could have done ; for, seemingly without any design on her part, she had by this means sufficient leisure and opportunity to consider the whole merit of her lover, to observe the changes his temper may possibly be liable to, to examine into the true motives of his attachment, and to form her judgment from thence of the sincerity of his passion ; happiness being, in her apprehension, a matter of too much consequence, to dispense with any vigilance or precaution in her power, that might prove either the certain means of attaining it, or at least of undeceiving her in due time, at the expence only of offering some little violence to her inclination : if this conduct therefore in Hortensius is to be esteemed, and I think it very justly may, as no less a proof of candour, than it was of judgment ; that of every lady, who precipitately admits, or rejects a lover without such previous conviction, must consequently be esteemed as great a proof of

of injustice, as it is of folly : and I imagine, that every woman of sense and delicacy, when she is once thoroughly convinced of the merit and sincerity of a lover, will easily be induced to give him credit for the fervour of his passion, nor too rashly condemn the want of warmth in his first addresses.

Be that however as it will, the conduct of Hortensius upon this occasion must have been at least perfectly agreeable to the sentiments of Arspacia ; for when he judged it to be a proper time to make his advances, he found no difficulties in the way, towards the completion of his happiness, that proved to be insuperable ; Arspacia's good understanding, joined to the just sense she had entertained of his merit, from the experience of a very long acquaintance, rendered all the little expedients of female artifice and affectation as utterly useless, as they are confessedly ridiculous ; and indeed, there were few foibles in the whole conduct of her sex, which she condemned more severely, than the capricious folly of trifling with the passion of a man of sense and strict honour.

Fabius had observed with infinite satisfaction the whole progress of this mutual attachment from its first rise ; he well knew the merit of Hortensius, and in

fact highly approved his passion ; yet, from a certain delicacy of apprehension, that, by a different conduct, he might possibly seem to controul in some degree his niece's inclination, he chose to act as if he understood nothing of the affair ; though he was all the while secretly endeavouring to facilitate its success, by giving the parties every opportunity they could wish for, and by every other contrivance in his power : but how immense the transport of Hortensius was, may indeed be much more easily imagined than expressed ; when upon a particular application he was informed by Fabius, that mere accident had lately given him an opportunity of becoming a successful advocate in his favour with Arspacia ; and that he could now undertake to assure him, that he had nothing more terrible to apprehend from her, than a certain interval of procrastination, which, he doubted not, by a proper exertion of the interest he had with her, but she might be prevailed upon to shorten.

This situation, in which our lovers were obliged to continue for some small time, though not compleatly happy, was however very much so in their opinion, as certainty had now totally excluded all the dreadful anxiety of suspense ; it was blessed

sed indeed with every flattering joy that the best founded hopes could inspire ; yet some degree of secret uneasiness must still necessarily arise from the mutual impatience of waiting for the lingering, but blissful minute, that was to sanctify their union. The prospect of my friend's approaching felicity gave me, I confess, an inexpressible pleasure ; which, however, had for some time suffered the cruellest alloy from my own idle, but frightful apprehensions, lest this event should in all probability prove the means of separating me, even before the arrival of Portia, from the society of people who were so justly dear to me.

But I was at length relieved from all the imaginary terror of these apprehensions, by the tender, the united efforts both of Hortensius and his amiable Arpacia ; who, observing in me an unusual dejection of spirits, were not less anxious to discover the true cause thereof, than instantly to remove it ; they accordingly informed me, that they had come to a resolution of living on with Fabius after their marriage ; and all of them jointly insisted, in the most affectionate terms, that I should continue with them for the time I had promised ; and further hoped, I would have no objection to their obtain-

ing my aunt's permission, when she arrived, for my residing at least some time in every year with them : this indeed was a circumstance that I assented to with no less gratitude than pleasure, and was consequently a witness, not only to the most endearing scenes of conjugal felicity that can possibly be imagined, but also to all the arts of domestick administration, as they were practised in their highest perfection ; to the nicest œconomy, and yet to the appearance of great splendor and magnificence ; to all the tender offices of friendship, without the base alloy of mercenary views, without affectation, without grimace ; in short, to the diffusion of universal benevolence, and a most extensive charity : but the manner of life of this happy pair, as it may perhaps be thought somewhat singular in the present age, I intend to make part of the subject of my next chapter.



C H A P. XV.

Some few occasional remarks of the authoress upon the subject of education in general: the happy effects of a good one, exemplified in the whole conduct of Hortensius and Arspacia: some particular anecdotes concerning them, which give an additional splendor to opulence, and at the same time do honour to humanity: Arspacia's publick and private character, widely different from that of the generality of modern fine ladies; her love of knowledge, tho' great, was still as free from the affectation of appearing learned, as it was from the folly of neglecting the oeconomy of her household on that account: the disinterested integrity of Hortensius farther illustrated by some few of his opinions on matters of government.

WHENEVER I happen to make the business of education the subject of my reflections, and find occasion, perhaps from some recent occurrences, to remark with what extraordinary circumstances of advantage a good education is most commonly attended, I am really at a loss to determine whether of the two is greater, my astonishment or indignation,

at the general inattention of parents to their children's true interest in so critical a concern: this capital error, if I conceive the matter right from the accounts which I have had, arises chiefly from hence, that in the male part of the species, the cultivation of genius alone is always considered as their principal object in view; though the management even of this, except I have been greatly misinformed, is generally conducted in a way that is liable to many just objections; but of what cannot be supposed to come fully and properly under my cognizance, such as a matter of this nature, I by no means allow myself to be a competent judge, and consequently presume not to give my opinion therein: in the female part, however, 'tis too evident, that the distinction, or cultivation of genius has nothing at all to do; a few specious accomplishments, that are merely exterior, make up, as I have more than once before observed in the course of this work, the whole sum of their acquirements; but by what inducement of utility, or true grace, so exceptionable a plan could have been so long continued, and still is so inflexibly adopted, for the direction of rational creatures; or indeed by the sanction of what authority, excepting merely that

that of tyrant-custom, it could have been so universally enforced, I confess, I am wholly at a loss to conjecture; yet this I believe to be a fact, and I appeal to the constant experience and observation of mankind for the confirmation of what I assert, that the true end, both of male and female education, but especially of the latter, as it is generally managed, is much oftener defeated than it is obtained; where it happens otherwise, which is indeed but seldom, except by the assistance of some better plan, I look upon it to proceed, rather from a critical concurrence of some favourable accidents, or from a peculiar temperament in the constitution of body and mind, in a child, than from any rectitude of judgment or method, either in the parent or pedagogue.

My reason for this assertion, and some reason I certainly ought to assign, since begging the question, or, in other words, asserting without proof, is but acting the part of Drawcansir in an argument; I say therefore, my reason for the assertion just advanced is this, that I think the true basis of education in general is very improperly laid, or at least not so sedulously attended to, as a point of that infinite importance deserves; I mean chiefly in regard to the care of imbuing the tender minds of young people with an early tincture of moral

goodness, and not only so, but that the same care should indispensably be continued, as they grow up, and constantly co-operate with every other means of instruction, to the confirmation of their principles in virtue, as well as to the cultivation of their genius in matters of literature : the more licentious and immoral the world is grown, and most indisputably grown so in a great measure from such neglect, the greater surely is the necessity for this precaution; but the truth is, where the views of parents are sordidly contracted to the single point of advancing their children's fortunes at all events, a just regard to the improvement of their morals makes but a very small, if any part at all, of their scheme, so that the most material part of education, and that which would in truth rather facilitate than impede the rest, is in a manner totally omitted; yet so it happens, that this very omission is not unfrequently punished, as it justly deserves, in the absolute disappointment of their success; so far at least as the enjoyment of true happiness can with propriety be admitted as the end of such success; for if it be impossible, in the nature of things, as is most unquestionably is, that the vicious and immoral man, so long as he continues such, can ever be a true friend even to himself, let
his

his genius be what it will; consequently the inward enjoyment of such a state of happiness, where virtuous principles are thus wanting, must absolutely be unattainable by him, notwithstanding all the outward appearances of success, that may at the same time do very considerable honour to his genius; but if I am to be unhappy, of what real importance, or advantage can all the success of genius, or fortune be to me; nay, I should be inclined to carry this point still farther, and to conclude, that nothing but the highest degree of stupidity, or corruption, could ever suppose, that such a person can be actuated by sentiments, which ought alone to render any man capable of becoming a friend to virtue, and to his country upon just principles; because his conduct, let him pretend what he will, actually disclaims all such principles; and therefore I should imagine, that the service of such a man, how great soever his abilities may be presumed, though it is sometimes perhaps employed; as the sole expedient of necessity, can yet, for want of those principles, be never thoroughly depended on, or sincerely esteemed by his country; which I hold to be none of the least, among the numberless disadvantages that result from a wrong education.

That

That the plan, which I have occasionally hinted at above, is not the practice generally received at present, will, I believe, be readily admitted; and that the many untoward consequences, flowing directly from this general neglect, are but too manifest, particularly in the numberless excrescences so observable in female conduct, I do presume, will scarcely be denied; but indeed, where the foundation is so confessedly bad, the superstructure, however speciously it may be ornamented, must nevertheless be always more imminently liable on that account to a great variety of unhappy accidents: this was however by no means the case in regard either to Hortensius or Arspacia; their education, from the first instant they were perceptive of any instruction, was considered as a matter of too great importance to admit of the least neglect or delay; and not only so, but it was founded upon such principles, and conducted with so much judgment and assiduity, that their improvements in virtue went always hand-in-hand with those of accomplishment and science: their respective governors were of opinion, and their opinion was certainly just, that the true end of education consisted not so essentially in qualifying some young people for business, in order to their acquiring

acquiring fortunes, and in polishing others, in order to their spending them gracefully, as it did, in making the intellectual powers in all acquire an absolute ascendancy over those that are inferior; and the happy effects of this plan were indeed most remarkably conspicuous throughout the whole life of that worthy pair, whose characters I have already attempted to give my readers a transient sketch of; which circumstance was in truth the principal motive of my presuming to offer the foregoing reflections, such as they have frequently occurred to me, upon the important subject of education in general.

• But to proceed to some further accounts of this amiable couple; who, besides the strongest sympathy of affection, seemed, by a very uncommon similitude of disposition and sentiments, to be in a manner destined wholly for each other; that they were therefore happily united at length in the tender bonds of Hymen, will, I suppose, be hardly thought surprizing; neither shall I be subjected, I hope, to the seemingly unpardonable censure of being thought too laconick upon this occasion, by omitting to give my readers a minute account of this memorable event; and of all the particular occurrences that attended the august celebration of these nuptials,
how

how interesting soever such a circumstantial detail may possibly be to many of them; since, by the friendly assistance of a little recollection, they may be furnished with the highest gratification in this way, by turning to some very florid and copious matrimonial descriptions, which have lately appeared in the world to great advantage, and which, no doubt, by every body, who understands the true value of time, must always be very highly esteemed, not only as compositions of genius, but likewise as they contribute so essentially to the two important articles of instruction and amusement; which circumstance would, I confess, be a sufficient incentive to my ambition, did not a certain degree of modesty, at the same time, very prudently preserve me from the folly of attempting to imitate what is so universally allowed to be imitable.

But be this as it will; Hortensius and Arspacia, as they had the peculiar happiness of ingrafting all the advantages of a well-regulated education upon dispositions and natural endowments that were remarkably good, made so amiable a figure in public life, as exhibited rather a most engaging model for imitation, than an occasion of ever rendering them the just objects either of scandal, ridicule, or malignant

lignant envy; but their domestick life was indeed replete with scenes of consummate blifs; they were truly happy, because they made virtue and good sense the invariable rule of all their actions; and always looked down with pity, if not with contempt, upon the several prevailing impieties, and fashionable follies of the age, however exalted the rank of those people may be, who could debase themselves and mankind by introducing and abetting such: Arspacia thought she could never sufficiently congratulate herself upon the happiness of being united to so excellent, so beloved a man; nor was Hortensius deficient, either in his constant acknowledgements for her generosity, or in his endeavours to improve her mind, in order to make her still the more agreeable companion for himself; while her fond heart received a new addition of gladness from every endearing lesson of instruction, as likewise indeed from every other circumstance that could possibly contribute to give him pleasure: in short, this deserving pair enjoyed, in an exquisite degree, all the sweets of a most refined and tender friendship for each other; but then it was such a friendship, as the conjugal state, from an indissoluble union of interests and inclinations, is alone capable of affording; where mutual
love,

love, though it must always make the principal ingredient therein, must nevertheless be always supported by that mutual esteem which virtue only can create; and indeed, where either of these happens to be wanting, the friendship of that state must consequently be too precarious and imperfect to admit of such a series of happiness, as might otherwise be confidently expected from thence.

That this important consideration hath not previously all the credit and influence with the generality of parties which it deserves, is, I believe, the justest reason that can be assigned, why so many marriages prove unfortunate, for one that is in reality the reverse: partial views, and separate schemes, both of interest and pleasure, formed merely by a flattering imagination, have too frequently deluded the matrimonial adventurers of both sexes into the sad experience of this truth; and disappointment has afterwards provoked them to violate, and disgrace that institution, which was originally designed to constitute the true happiness of all: not thus however did Hortensius and his Arspacia come together; their's was in the strictest sense an union of hearts, more firmly, because mutually obliged, than all the force of interested motives, or the sanction of human

man laws could make it: indeed, according to the common opinion and practice of the world, Arspacia's large fortune and personal merit might very justly have entitled her to what is generally, though often too confidently, esteemed a better match; but, as she chose to be really happy, rather than really to appear so, all her sentiments, in regard to the means of procuring such a scene of happiness by marriage, conspired to make her choice center in Hortensius; and these sentiments of her's were, in truth, not more immediately the tender dictates of inclination, than they were confessedly the suggestions of sound judgment, as was fully justified by the event; for Hortensius felt, upon this occasion, every endearing impulse that love and gratitude combined could possibly inspire; and, with the most engaging tenderness and assiduity, exerted all his powers, as well to preserve, as to confirm the high opinion she had thus conceived of him; his affection, in short, suffered no one circumstance to escape him, that was capable of affording her the least pleasure; and as often as intervals from business would admit, he was always industrious to strike out some new scene of amusement, in order to convince her, that the fortune she had so generously bestowed upon

upon him could be but of very little value in his estimation, if not chearfully employed on every occasion that might do her all the honour she deserved, and at the same time render life as agreeable to her as she could wish: indeed the man of virtue and good understanding, who is thus obliged, can scarcely help discovering his sensibility upon all occasions in the most expressive manner; for he is ever contriving the happiness of her, who made so remarkable a distinction in his favour.

Arspacia, it must be confessed, differed very widely from the generality of our modern fine ladies; as she always thought justly, she consequently judged, that the most honourable character she could aspire at was that of being a good wife; and there was undoubtedly both wisdom and virtue in this resolution; duty and inclination coincided to strengthen her opinion, nor could all the force of fashion ever prevail against it: her house was never suffered to be made a rendezvous for libertines of either sex, how great soever their quality may be; for even this circumstance, she thought, tended rather to aggravate their crime, than to exempt them from the censure which it so justly incurred: the absurd, though common practice of squeezing and cooping up a number of people together,
for

For whom perhaps she cared not a single farthing, under the elegant denomination of a rout, or rather from the false, but flattering notion of appearing to greater advantage on that account in the polite world, could never gain admission into the circle of her amusements; her good sense was always proof against the infection of every fashion, both in dress and manners, let it be never so epidemical, which had even a remote tendency to corrupt the one, or to render the other either indecent or ridiculous: the destructive business of play, carried on with that unquenchable spirit which it has been for some time past, both by the little gamblers and the great, she looked upon with the utmost detestation, as it was so frequently productive of other shocking consequences, besides the ravaging expence it seldom fails to create; so far as it might be confined within the limits of an innocent amusement, she had not the least objection to that, or indeed to any other of the publick diversions, upon the same condition: but neither avarice, nor the love of pleasure, nor yet the ridiculous affectation of being incorrigibly devoted to the mode, when she thought it wrong, could ever prevail upon her to deviate from those principles of virtue and right reason, in which she had been educated,

cated, or tempt her to act upon any occasion inconsistently with the dictates of her own judgment.

There was, in short, in the whole circle of female virtues and accomplishments, scarcely any one, that could be thought either useful or ornamental, of which she was not mistress; but what was still more eminently distinguishable in her, as I observed before, was her making a most excellent wife, in the fullest extent of that character; which, in her opinion, was not to be confined merely to the single, though interesting circumstance of conjugal tenderness, notwithstanding that her's was indeed both unabated and exemplary; but it comprehended, as she rightly judged, a great variety of particulars, from the minute inspection whereof she thought her fortune, great as it was, was however so far from exempting her, that it still the more necessarily engaged her attention upon that account; having always looked upon a judicious œconomy, as no less the parent of true charity, than it was of magnificence: by her prudent management therefore, without seeming to lessen in the smallest degree the appearance of that splendor, which was indispenibly expected from her fortune and condition in the world;
she

she was nevertheless enabled to devote every year a considerable sum to the beneficent use of educating a certain number of poor girls, the children of distressed, but honest and industrious parents; but her benevolence rested not here; for it was not one of the least agreeable among her amusements, when in the country, to see, with her own eyes, that these objects of her humanity were carefully instructed in the principles of the christian religion, and likewise taught whatever might make them useful to society in the capacity of good household servants.

Inspired by her amiable example, Hortensius had the same number of boys brought up with equal care; and at a certain age he had them bound out apprentices, according to their several abilities, to such trades as they were judged to be fittest for; if a remarkable genius, as was sometimes the case, happened to appear among them, he always took particular care that it should receive every advantage of improvement which it was capable of; and some few there certainly were, that emerged from this obscure nursery, the fruits of whose distinguished abilities, their descendants at this day seem to enjoy with as little decency as merit: these two seminaries were managed

in the most proper manner that could be, under the immediate inspection of their generous patron and patroness ; who enjoyed for many years the highest satisfaction in seeing them succeed according to their true intention, and in sending out annually into the world, after a certain time, a great number of useful, honest and industrious people : but Hortensius was still too wise to consent, that these schools should ever be endowed in perpetuity by him, as he had very justly remarked, upon many occasions of the same kind, the scandalous abuse that is made of all such charities, by perverting absolutely the original designs of their several worthy founders, and consequently by rendering such societies, rather nurseries of idleness, and indeed downright nuisances in the several places where they are settled, than well regulated establishments for the propagation of industry, and the seasonable relief of the distressed : so long as he and his Arspacia lived, they could be well assured, that what they had so generously given, would be faithfully and properly applied, but they chose to risque nothing farther ; having so often seen some of the best intended donations of this kind iniquitously appropriated, either as the immediate prey of avarice, or
wantonly

wantonly frittered away in erecting palaces, instead of alms-houses, and also in decorating them pompously for the more commodious reception of some petty tyrant, that was solely to give the law there to a number of useless officers and servants : but this was such a palpable abuse, that Hortensius thought it a crime to let even the smallest part of his fortune go towards the support thereof : as the love of his fellow-creatures, not the gratification of his vanity, was always the true motive of his bounty upon such occasions, whatever he gave, he made it an invariable rule to be convinced, that the application thereof should fully answer his intentions ; and few people, I believe, of his fortune, ever contributed to undertakings that were really charitable, or publick-spirited, more generously, or more judiciously than himself ; which not only his own tenants and dependants experienced very sensibly, but, in short, all the distressed poor within many miles of his seat in the country, where both he and his lady were revered almost as beings of a superior order ; for his attention particularly, whenever he was there, which was as often as he possibly could, was chiefly occupied in promoting and encouraging an universal spirit of industry, by

liberally rewarding such of the country people as he observed to be most diligent in training up their children in this way, and indeed by every other method that he could possibly devise, to be most conducive to so good a purpose; in so much that no individual, who was capable of labour, dared to ask relief, for fear of that punishment which he justly deserved, both as an idle vagrant, and as one who would thus impudently defraud the truly indigent of what was intended only for their support; who were by this vigilance comfortably subsisted. and all that part of the country likewise kept constantly free from that pest of common strolling beggars, that are, not only a disgrace to every nation, which either out of indolence, or a mistaken lenity permits them, but they prove also the certain instruments of seducing numbers of the people to idleness and theft, who would otherwise become useful in some degree to the community.

In acts of publick and private beneficence, like those which I have related, did this happy pair usually spend a considerable part of their time; and the high-felt pleasure they derived from thence, was always thought a sufficient reward to encourage their perseverance therein: though no woman perhaps had a truer relish

relish for books than Arspacia, or understood better whatever she read, yet she always guarded carefully against the affectation of appearing learned; she chose to let all her learning, whatever it was, appear only in the strength of her judgment, and the rectitude of her conduct; but even that never out of ostentation; all learning and knowledge, particularly in women, which did not tend directly to this point, she looked upon as absolutely fantastick and useless, as it distinguished them by no means to their advantage: and yet, I fear, it is not altogether improbable, but some learned pop-gun in petticoats (for such I have sometimes had the misfortune of meeting with) who are far gone in metaphysical disquisitions; and as a modern ingenious author has informed us,

Study Sir Isaac at the pastry school,
And make mince-pies by mathematick
rule;

Know every art, and every science teach,
Of nothing ignorant—but how to stitch.

I say, it is not improbable, but some of the literati of this class may think the character of Arspacia extremely insipid; but if so, I shall instantly be obliged, ei-

ther to suspect their right to the honour of being ranked among the softer sex; or, if wrong in that conjecture, to implore their nearest relations to provide for the speedy recovery of their health: the men, at least such of them, whose understanding is worthy of attention (if such do me the honour to peruse this work) will, I flatter myself, be of a very different opinion in regard to the merit of Arspacia; for I have always remarked, that the sensible part of that sex have been unanimous in recommending domestick duties to the practice of the fair; I therefore thought it much more consistent with reason, as well as with truth, to give them a real character for the benefit of their imitation, than to exhibit the mere creature of my own imagination; which, however it may be worked up to a certain pitch of enthusiastick purity and perfection, must nevertheless be for the most part as useless, as it is fictitious, by its being rendered thus inimitable.

In short, whatever virtues or excellencies Arspacia was mistress of, that rendered her in so eminent a degree superior, I will not say to all the rest of her sex, though certainly to most of them, they were natural, they were decent, and by no means extended beyond that critical line, which bounds so happily the female character;

character ; they were always ready to be exerted for the benefit of any of her fellow-creatures who stood in need thereof, but never to procure a vain empty applause for herself : she was indeed extremely desirous of improving her mind with every species of knowledge that was proper for her ; but then she always implicitly submitted her own opinion, as to the propriety of such knowledge, to the judgment of Hortensius, from whom alone she chose to receive all her instruction : the pleasing description, which Milton has given us of our first parent's blissful situation in paradise, communicates so lively an idea of that in which Hortensius and his amiable Arspacia lived, that I could not resist the strong impulse I felt to quote it, for which, should it be thought too tedious an intrusion upon the patience of my fair readers, I humbly implore their forgiveness.

So spake our sire, and by his count'nance
seemed

Ent'ring on studious thought abstruse ;
which Eve

Perceiving, where she sat retir'd in sight,
With lowliness majestick, from her seat,
And grace that won who saw to wish her
stay,

Rose, and went forth among her fruits
 and flow'rs,
 To visit how they prospered, bud and
 bloom,
 Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,
 And, touch'd by her fair tendance, glad-
 lier grew;
 Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
 Delighted, or not capable her ear
 Of what was high; such pleasure she re-
 serv'd,
 Adam relating, she sole auditress;
 Her husband the relater she preferr'd
 Before the angel, and of him to ask,
 Chose rather: he, she knew, would inter-
 mix
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
 With conjugal caresses; from his lip
 Not words alone pleas'd her. O when
 meet now
 Such pairs in love, and mutual honour
 join'd!

The most perfect happiness, that I had
 ever tasted as yet, was in this agreeable
 family; where I had now resided, from
 the death of Sipiana, for near three whole
 years, and where indeed, without the most
 unpardonable levity, or grossest insensibi-
 lity, I could scarce avoid making such
 observations, on the many exemplary vir-
 tues

tues of this excellent couple, as must necessarily prove of infinite service to me in the government and direction of my own life: as often therefore as occasion happens to call forth the recollection of these pleasing scenes, I cannot help being astonished beyond measure, at the extraordinary conduct of the generality of mankind; but more particularly of those, who seem industrious to make themselves really miserable and detested, though they are at the same time profusely blessed with every means of being extremely happy within themselves, and also with a great variety of opportunities to diffuse happiness all around them; as if they thought, that their supreme enjoyment was to consist merely in being actuated by a diabolical spirit of obduracy and contradiction to every social dictate of humanity, benevolence, and a just regard to the true interests of their country: the truth in short is, as I have often heard Hortensius declare, that pride and luxury, ambition and avarice, have rendered the hearts of all such wretches most impenetrably callous, and have absolutely divested them of the sense of feeling any thing except the influence of that corruption, which they think most likely to procure the immediate gratification of these passions: that which was

never in the power of our most inveterate enemies, at home or abroad, to have executed, either by treaty or the sword, this has effectually accomplished; in the place of publick, as well as private virtue, it hath established, under the pretence of rectifying our political principles, a fraudulent spirit of selfishness, and a general depravity of morals: I have frequently heard Hortensius remark, that amongst the several causes assigned in history for the reduction of free states under the dominion of arbitrary power, there were none more striking or infallible than those of luxury, and a general corruption of manners; and that whenever a people, by being thus universally tainted, became once so far lost to virtue, as to be divested of the sense of feeling for their country, they were always sure to be divested likewise of the sense of seeing, that slavery would be the inevitable consequence of such a conduct: and indeed I cannot help thinking, that the wretch, who has always lived an infamous slave to his own passions, and, as far as in him lay, has been the vile instrument of involving his country in slavery, is highly unworthy the honour, or the happiness, so much as of breathing in a free government: but this is not all; such miscreants have seldom wholly escaped a punishment more adequate

adequate to their crimes; for although they may have been sometimes so fortunate as to elude the just stroke of publick vengeance, yet, besides the infamy of living universally detested, they have often been obliged to feel the additional mortification of being thought too flagitious and contemptible to share farther in any of the honours or emoluments even of corruption itself, for this very good reason, that they took care to execute their work so perfectly, as to leave no further occasion for the employment of such iniquitous tools.

The generous indignation I have heard the worthy Hortensius express against this execrable practice, and the clear and incontestable reasons with which he has often demonstrated the deplorable effects it must at one time or other produce in every free government where it is adopted, fill me, I confess, as I believe it must all honest minds, with the utmost astonishment and concern, whenever I happen to reflect upon this subject, that some wise and salutary measures have not been contrived, to put a stop to what has been so universally objected to, as every way pregnant both with present and future evil; an expedient, which, by vitiating the morals and principles of almost all degrees of people, unhinges the very foundation of law and

equity, and effectually destroys the only possible assurance that can be esteemed sacred for the security of life and property; an expedient, in short, which creates such a ruinous expence to support it, as, with all its success, renders the chief promoters thereof truly odious and detestable, who ought, and in all probability would otherwise be highly respectable. But can the success, which is supposed to attend this favourite expedient, by any means be allowed to countervail these just, these formidable objections? surely no more, in truth, than the stale, the flimsy pretence, for which it is generally said to be employed: there seems to be, and I hope it will always continue, particularly in this happy country of our's, a kind of innate aversion, in almost all ranks of people, except Jews and papists, to the introduction of slavery; and indeed to every system, either of religion or politicks, under what plausible denominations soever they may be broached, which seem in any degree to countenance it; the justice and magnanimity of our present prince, and the strength of our excellent constitution, must render every apprehension of that kind utterly groundless: such has always been esteemed the genius of this nation, such the wisdom, the gratitude, and withal the laudable

laudable spirit of the people in general that whatever measures have been found, upon experience, to be most successfully calculated for executing the laws with equal punctuality and impartiality, the same have always been allowed to prove the most effectual for preserving the fidelity and attachment of the people unshaken; as was signally testified by their unanimous efforts to quell the two unnatural rebellions in the years 1715 and 1745; which, as it plainly takes away the necessity, and consequently the pretence of using other more extraordinary measures for the accomplishment of that purpose, so likewise should it always effectually remove the least apprehension, that the use of any such measures can ever be intended.

For my own part, as a woman, I presume not, because I think it would be departing from my proper character, to offer any thing on such subjects, as directly from myself; therefore, whatever I have already mentioned in this way, or may hereafter mention, is nothing more than an occasional recollection of some circumstances and opinions, which I have at several times heard Hortensius advance in conversation; and, among others, I well remember to have heard him affirm, that no subject of this kingdom, except a papist, or an egre-

glous fool, or knave, could really be in principle what is commonly called a Jacobite, however he may, on certain occasions, be fashionably stigmatized with that appellation; for, according to his conception of the matter, such principles, in the system of a true protestant, are altogether inconsistent with every suggestion, both of his religion and his interest, and consequently with common sense; so that in the eye of reason, however culpable the conduct of such a protestant may be in other respects, Jacobitism, in the true sense of that crime, can possibly make no part of his character: Hortensius was of opinion, that there were always a number of people in this country, who are purposely commissioned to avail themselves of all the advantages they possibly can, by appearing to be protestants, who are nevertheless papists in the full extent of that capacious faith; and these, he could readily admit, must indeed be either Jacobites, in the true signification of that term, or else they must be actually false to their own principles, which, by the way, is not a very common phenomenon amongst papists, especially when it is to operate for the protestant interest; and therefore he thought, that such sort of protestants could not be guarded against with too much vigilance; yet, strange as this

this may seem, it was but too plain, he said, that some even of these were not always thought the more unworthy of confidence upon that account; but how this was to be reconciled to the dictates of sound policy, he was wholly at a loss to determine; especially while he observed, that the imputation of Jacobite principles was frequently made an insuperable obstruction in the way of those who were indisputably true protestants; except indeed religion is to be considered, in all political systems, as nothing more than a meer pretence, an idle empty sound without any meaning at all; which conclusion, it must be confessed, the practice of some very eminent statesmen doth abundantly justify; but alas! many of their opinions, equally in politicks as in religion, have proved, upon experience, to be most notoriously erroneous.

Of what importance it is to the happiness of mankind, and to the good of society, to entertain just notions of the christian religion, and to let such their conviction appear to the world in a suitable practice of its divine precepts; it is not only the duty of every individual to consider seriously for himself, but it is indispensably that of the clergy also to inculcate in the most pathetick manner they can; among
whom

whom, though I firmly believe there are, at this time, many illustrious examples of learning, piety, and virtue, yet sorry I am to say, that I believe there are still many more who are directly the reverse, and that even among those who are benefited; whose time, for the most part, is too importantly employed, in shewing themselves to the best advantage at court, and in assiduously haunting all the levees of the great, to attend to any thing so inglorious as the pastoral care; this drudgery therefore, as it is too far beneath the dignity of their merit, they generally leave to be performed by a journeyman, no matter what his abilities or morals are, whom they hire for the wretched stipend of forty pounds a year: I speak not thus, as is perhaps too frequently done by the ignorant and profane scoffer, merely with a view to throw out indiscriminately some unmerited reflections against a respectable order of men; for whom, when they perform their duty as they ought to do, I entertain the highest reverence and honour; but it is a complaint that is too universally, and, I am afraid, too justly made, to be wholly without foundation; especially at a time when the poison of infidelity seems to be diffusing itself so widely amongst us, that it calls forth every effort both of example and precept to controul its progress. It

It is an old, but a very just remark, that all who attack the Christian system have certainly an interest in doing so; I cannot contradict the remark; but sure I am, that it must be such an interest as, in the opinion of all wise and good men, is infinitely more vile than that of the vilest robber; for if we examine into the true foundation of this mighty, this important interest, that can preponderate thus strongly against all the received notions and means of happiness, and consequently against all the lights of reason and conviction; I say, upon due examination, this interest will be found to consist, either in a certain rapture of intellectual pride, worked up to an overbearing presumption of parts superior to all the rest of mankind, or in the shocking privilege, if I may be allowed the expression, of being a rational brute without restraint; that is, of being, in other words, a monster; and it is not very uncommon to meet with both these characters conjoined in one and the same person: what else but an interest of this kind, or the most diabolical species of enmity that ever yet possessed the human heart, could possibly have induced the late lord Bolingbroke to pour forth the whole torrent of his impiety against his own countrymen? and not indeed against them alone, but
against

against the whole Christian world; whereby he seems to have far out-shot even the malignity of Nero himself; who was so moderate, as to limit the impulse of his wicked fury to the single wish of being able to destroy, if he could accomplish it at one stroke, only the whole people of Rome; but the Christian world has at least the satisfaction of being assured, that his lordship's true character is too notoriously known to let it enforce his doctrine, and will, I hope, be too faithfully transmitted to posterity, ever to suffer his pernicious tenets to do that mischief to mankind, for which they seem to have been peculiarly calculated. The particulars of those tenets have already been abundantly obviated, and too solidly refuted to need any assistance from the feeble pen of a woman; but feeble as my pen is, had none other undertaken it, I should have thought it glorious in such a cause to have dared; even at the peril of exposing my own want of learning: all my design in mentioning his lordship's works, is but to declare occasionally my own abhorrence of them; and particularly to alarm my fair countrywomen against the vile tendency of their principles; for, notwithstanding his lordship's pretended reverence for the deity upon all occasions, he, that could go about to
destroy

destroy the moral attributes of God, could, in fact, have no very favourable opinion of his natural attributes; if I am to deprive myself of the happiness of praising and revering that infinite goodness and mercy, whole influence I feel every moment while I breathe, I shall soon be easily induced to think myself too contemptible and unworthy, if not too audacious, to be in any respect the object of infinite wisdom and power; and if I can bring myself to believe, that at my death I shall certainly perish, both body and soul, like the beasts of the field, (which, by the way, is the comfortable sum of his lordship's ingenious creed upon the doctrine of futurity) I shall, most certainly, be no farther circumspect, in regard to the latitude of indulging my passions, than as the imperfect laws of society and government oblige me to be; and how extensive such a latitude would be, when still farther prompted by a probability of escaping even the penalties of those laws, a very small portion of experience may suffice to evince; in short, according to his lordship's system, to be virtuous and pious, is to be highly imprudent: by the few hints I have thrown out upon this occasion, I hope I shall not be thought liable to the imputation of any virulence or uncharitableness; but, should such a charge

charge be brought against me, I can, with great justice, plead his lordship's example in my defence; though I should be extremely sorry to make him the object of my imitation on any other account, because I think he was a dishonour to his rank, a disgrace to his country, and an infamy to the whole human species; such an unaccountable compound of genius, vice, and folly, as evidently proves the weakness and insufficiency of mere human reason, unassisted by the influence of that grace, which he has so hardily, yet so inconsistently, laboured to destroy. Whatever rectitude of principles the *friendly* editor of his *pious* works may really be possessed of, he himself best knows; but, by the pestiferous present he has thus made to his fellow-creatures, the publick will be obliged to judge of him from thence: the vilest miscreant that deals in poison, would shudder at the thoughts of administering it for the destruction of mankind in general; yet so far is it from any apprehensions of this kind in the present case, that repeated editions of this most execrable of all poisons have been exhibited to the publick with impunity.

That the Christian religion has ever proved a real detriment to society, or obstructed the peaceable administration of govern-

government, as lord Bolingbroke has more than once very confidently asserted, I, with much more truth, as positively deny; that the corruption and abuse of it indeed have often been the means of both, I will readily admit; but had not his lordship's inveterate prejudice against that system occasionally perverted his judgment, he might have reasoned more justly, than to have inferred the absolute inutility of any thing from the palpable abuse thereof: the same unhappy prejudice seems to have affected his lordship's memory sometimes; for notwithstanding the bitterness he has expressed against this system in almost every page of his philosophical works, yet he fully admits it to be a republication of the religion of nature; and consequently, by implication, allows it to be revealed from God: indeed the Christian religion is so far from inculcating any thing to the prejudice of society, or to the interruption of government, that it rigorously restrains all its professors from offending even in thought, and every where suggests the strongest injunctions to peace and universal charity: and so strenuously recommends a due submission to all persons who are vested with lawful authority, that, I think, a man's principles must be very strongly tainted with infidelity, before he can become

come a bad subject ; and I verily believe, that, had his lordship been a better man, I mean a better Christian, he would, without all doubt, have made a much better subject ; this at least must be admitted by all, except the infidel tribe, that, as no form of good government can long subsist without some religion, I mean a religion established by law, consequently none other but the Christian religion, from the nature and whole tendency of its principles, can seem, to unprejudiced reason, to be so happily calculated for that purpose.

Whatever national advantages may, in fact, result from a strict agreement between the established religion in this country, and the whole tenor of political proceedings, I shall not take upon me to point out, as I presume that they are already too manifest to all the true friends of their country to require any illustration ; neither shall I stay to inquire, whether people in general are less religious now, than they were at the time of the revolution in 1688 ; I sincerely wish they were much more so than they are ; but, be that as it will, supposing, yet by no means admitting, that religion is nothing more than a mere political pretence, it was however thought to be of infinite consequence at that time, nay indeed the very angular stone, that supported and preserved

preserved both liberty and property, agreeable to the letter and the spirit of our excellent constitution: there is, in truth, so just, so intimate a connection, in the minds of all protestants here, between popery and slavery, that it is almost impossible to conceive an idea of the one, without its being found at the same time in close association with the other; if therefore what is considered by many as nothing but a mere political pretence, could prove so successful in so critical a conjuncture, it cannot be thought a crime to hope, that it will always prove the same, whenever the same occasion may render it necessary, which, thank God, is very far from being the case at present.

But from numberless anecdotes, which he had collected from the histories of different countries, I have often heard Hor-tensius undertake to prove, beyond the power of contradiction, that a free people may come, by almost imperceptible degrees, to be at last effectually reduced under the subjection of absolute power, by a great variety of other ways and means, besides that of forcibly obtruding upon them any innovations in their religious system; and particularly whenever such a people happen to be overwhelmed with an intolerable burden of debts and taxes, and their mo-
rals

rals almost universally depraved by confirmed habits of corruption, at the same time that their bodies are enervated by every species of luxury that can possibly be invented; how therefore a people in such circumstances, when sufficiently ripened for the yoke, should expect to be defended from it, except by some very extraordinary interposition of providence in their favour, let the wisdom of the wise determine. But I find that I have already strayed too far from the original design of this chapter, which I should by no means presume to have done, had I not judged, that a short sketch of the political principles of Hortensius would give the truest illustration to his character, and, at the same time, do all that honour to his memory, which a uniform and steadfast integrity, and an unbiassed love for his country, most eminently deserved.

C H A P. XVI.

Recapitalation of the authoreſs's deſign in undertaking this work; her reaſon for the manner in which it is carried on: the arrival of Portia; a particular deſcription of her, and ſome account of her family; a very intereſting ſcene, in which ſhe is principally concerned, partly related.

I Have already informed my fair readers, in ſome of the preceding chapters, that the improvement of their charms was my chief deſign in this undertaking, as indeed the title of the work itſelf imports; and therefore, as I muſt unavoidably ſeem to have deviated ſometimes from this agreeable ſubject, I think it my duty to aſſure them, that it has nevertheless been always my moſt favourite point of view; and a point of ſo great importance, in my opinion, that upon the ſucceſs thereof, if that could once be fairly accompliſhed, I have no doubt, but a happy reformation both of men and things would ſpeedily enſue; for the influence of true beauty upon the manners and diſpoſitions of the other ſex, when properly exerted, even they themſelves
allow

allow to be absolutely uncontrollable ; in-
 somuch that a palpable neglect on our
 part renders us doubly criminal here ; we
 betray a shameful insensibility, not only
 in regard to our own private interest, but
 in a great measure to that of the publick
 also.

In the conduct of this work I proposed,
 it is true, the narrative of my own story ;
 yet it was only to be as a kind of ground-
 work for the rest ; for as I determined to
 preserve through the whole the strictest
 adherence to the truth, I will confess that
 the subject, so far as it relates immedi-
 ately to myself, abounds but little in in-
 cidents of so extraordinary a nature, as
 to be able to affect the imagination or
 passions of any of my readers very deeply ;
 and consequently that it must appear, as
 I believe I may occasionally have observed
 before, much too simple and uninterest-
 ing to keep up their curiosity, and carry on
 their attention to remote events ; but the
 great variety of characters, discoverable
 in the several persons with whom I be-
 came accidentally connected, may make
 a very material alteration in this matter ;
 especially as a just representation of those
 opposite characters, with the reflections
 arising naturally from thence, must al-
 ways be allowed to convey some degree
 of

of instruction to such of my fair countrywomen as are not, in their own opinion, too perfectly accomplished already to require it ; and this is the true reason, that has so often obliged me seemingly to digress from the main purpose of my original plan, though, in my own view, I have all the while never once lost sight thereof.

I would therefore by no means be understood, upon the present occasion, to insinuate my own example, as a pattern every way worthy the imitation of my fair readers ; very far from it ; for although I verily believe, that there are few people, who may in truth be happier than myself, I am not however as yet so far intoxicated with that happiness, or the importance of any merit in me to create it, that should flatter me with the vanity of exhibiting my own character as a complete model ; I would propose for this purpose one that is infinitely more eligible, because it is in every respect more interesting and instructive ; that of a person who, without one conscious act of indiscretion, had experienced many of the capricious vicissitudes of fortune ; and who, though possessed of extraordinary merit, had been involved in some scenes of the most cutting affliction ; yet, in the midst

Of all this, behaved with that true fortitude, and dignity of virtue, that justly rendered her the admiration of all who knew her ; the person I here mean, is no other than the excellent, the incomparable Portia, who about this time, to my infinite satisfaction, arrived from France ; where, as I have already observed, she was detained much longer than she at first expected, by certain difficulties that occurred in the adjustment of her brother's affairs ; this brother had been an eminent merchant and banker at Amsterdam, and had established a large correspondence at Paris, where a considerable share of his effects happened to be embarked at the time of his death ; and as Portia had been appointed the sole executrix of his will, she was consequently obliged, either to attend in person, till those difficulties should be finally settled, or to be content with being otherwise a considerable sufferer thereby.

But before I enter into a particular detail of this lady's character, I think it will be necessary to give my readers some more explicit account of her family than I have hitherto done ; her father then, whom I shall call by the name of Trade-well, since that is the name I have given to my own, was a native of France, as
all

all his family were ; he married the daughter of one of the principal financiers of that kingdom, by whom he had three children ; Dennis, the eldest, whom I have just mentioned, as having been settled at Amsterdam ; Charles, who was my father ; and Portia, who is the present subject : old Tradewell lived altogether at Paris in the capacity of a banker, and by his remarkable probity, and extensive knowledge in business, joined to the advantageous alliance he had made, which considerably increased the latter, he justly acquired the reputation of being the first man in his profession in that capital, notwithstanding the great obstacle of his religion, which was that of the reformed ; he had likewise one only brother, who had been for some time happily established as a merchant in the East Indies ; at the time the persecution against the protestants raged with greatest violence in France, old Tradewell came off to England ; as he had for some time foreseen the storm gathering, he wisely provided against it, and was fortunate enough to transmit by degrees his whole effects here, before his own arrival, which, with his lady and children, he afterwards accomplished in safety : his first care, as soon as he was thoroughly settled, was

to provide for his two sons, who were now of a proper age for that purpose; and as he had himself very sensibly experienced the happy effects of an honest industry, he determined to bring them both up to business, though his present acquisitions might have supported them decently without it; he accordingly placed the elder, as we have already seen, at Amsterdam, and the younger he bound to a Hamburg merchant in the city of London; in short, the old gentleman, having lived to see both his sons become their own masters, and in a very prosperous way of business, being now full of years, departed this life in hopeful tranquility.

His lady, whom I shall hereafter distinguish by the name of Lucia, went, soon after his decease, together with her daughter, to reside at my father's, who was not as yet married; here her whole time and care were employed in the education and improvement of the no less blooming than hopeful Portia; and indeed, I believe that no woman was ever more capable of forming a young female mind, than was the wise and truly virtuous Lucia; for she was blessed with the soundest judgment, and the strictest purity of morals; but it must at the same time be acknowledged, as an extraordinary means to have facilitated the success of those

those her endeavours, that Portia had the happiness of being naturally endowed with excellent faculties, and such an uncommon sweetness of disposition, as sparkled too faithfully through her lovely eyes, to suffer her to conceal it, if she would; nor was the beauty and elegance of her whole person in any respect inferior to this short, but amiable transcript of her mind.

About the time she had attained to her twentieth year, having been very little seen before, she accidentally fell into company, at a friend's house, with a gentleman, whom I shall call Machaon, and whom indeed the lovely Portia soon deprived of ease and freedom; as this gentleman was well known to all her friends, he found little difficulty in obtaining their permission to visit at Tradewell's; and as he was likewise extremely agreeable both in person and manner, and possessed moreover of a good estate, it is to be presumed, that he found still less in obtaining that of the admired Portia for the same purpose: the conquest, therefore, which her personal charms had, upon the first interview, but just begun, those of her understanding and conversation, in a few subsequent visits, so intirely compleated, that Machaon solicited, with the utmost impatience, both the young lady herself, her mother,

mother, and brother, for leave to make his addressee to her in form; which, after a proper inquiry into his character, and the particulars of his fortune, was at length permitted: affairs in so prosperous a train, as the present seemed to be, are always the most likely to produce a speedy crisis; and thus indeed it happened here; for the merit of each of the parties, as it sufficiently justified this sudden force of mutual inclination, so did it consequently remove every plausible pretence that might be urged for the delay of their happiness; in-somuch, that when the preliminaries were all adjusted, the settlements drawn, cloaths bought, and bridal ornaments presented; the happy day, to the distance only of a fortnight, was at last fixed; the young lady had desired, as the season of the year invited, that she and some of her friends might pass this interval at an agreeable villa of her brother's, which was not many miles out of town; and it was agreed, that, on the day after their return from thence, the nuptial ceremony should be performed.

Machaon, who had not for a single day omitted his assiduities during her retirement in this place, returned to town at the appointed time with the rest of the company, and all, in the highest flow of spirits

spirits imaginable, spent the evening most happily together; but sure, when the succeeding morning appeared, that was still more perfectly to have confirmed their happiness, the consternation, in which this whole family was involved, is not to be described: Tradewell had been very early informed, that Machaon was most dangerously ill; and so in fact it proved; he hastened instantly to his house, and found him in bed, surrounded by several of his friends, and likewise by several of the faculty, who all seemed to think his life was in most imminent danger; he had been for some time seemingly delirious, and had again recovered the use of his reason; but, on the first sight of Tradewell, he cried out, with all the vehemence he could exert, oh my friend! Portia has deceived both of us, and then became speechless, and fainted away; all this, as it appeared very extraordinary to the spectators, who were entirely ignorant of his connections with Portia and her family, so did it astonish poor Tradewell beyond the utmost power of comprehension, especially as he was quite satisfied in regard to the innocence of his sister; so that he immediately concluded, whatever was the real cause of Machaon's malady, his intellects must have been greatly impaired;
upon

upon inquiry into the nature of his disorder, he was informed by the physicians, that he had been very desperately wounded, that the surgeons were not as yet certain whether some of his wounds were not mortal; so that, as they had observed a very extraordinary agitation in him at the appearance of Tradewell, they begged he would be so obliging as to leave the room; which he instantly did; and was informed by Machaon's servants, that their master had, unknown to any of them, gone out very early that morning, which they had never known him do before, and was brought home wounded in that dangerous manner, and that this was all the account they were able to give about it.

But this indeed was such an account, as soon helped to confirm Tradewell in his suspicion, that nothing else but a sudden phrenzy could have seized Machaon thus, and instigated him to the commission of some outrageous act, that had unhappily brought on this dreadful consequence; so that filled, as he now was, with the most uneasy reflections, he immediately returned home, and, in a conference with Lucia, he faithfully reported Machaon's unhappy situation, and likewise the particular circumstances upon which his own private conjectures about it were founded; it was agreed

agreed therefore between them, that Portia should at first be informed of this melancholy tale only in part, as, that Machaon had been suddenly taken ill early that morning, and was attended by a physician, who was of opinion, that his disorder would turn out to be a fever, and hoped the best from thence: this precaution, in regard to Portia, they judged to be indispensably necessary; for although her strength of mind might, upon most other occasions, be safely depended on, yet, as that of her bodily frame was much inferior, and as virtue, prudence, and honour, did all conspire here, with the approbation of her friends, to attest how sincerely the interest of her heart was engaged in favour of this unhappy man, they consequently concluded, that the communication of so fatal an event required to be managed with the utmost delicacy of address: but the result of this affair, as it admits of a number of circumstances, which have not been hinted to the reader as yet, will, for that reason, appear with greater convenience in the ensuing part of this work.

F I N I S.









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Mary Beantley her Book
March 28 1763



